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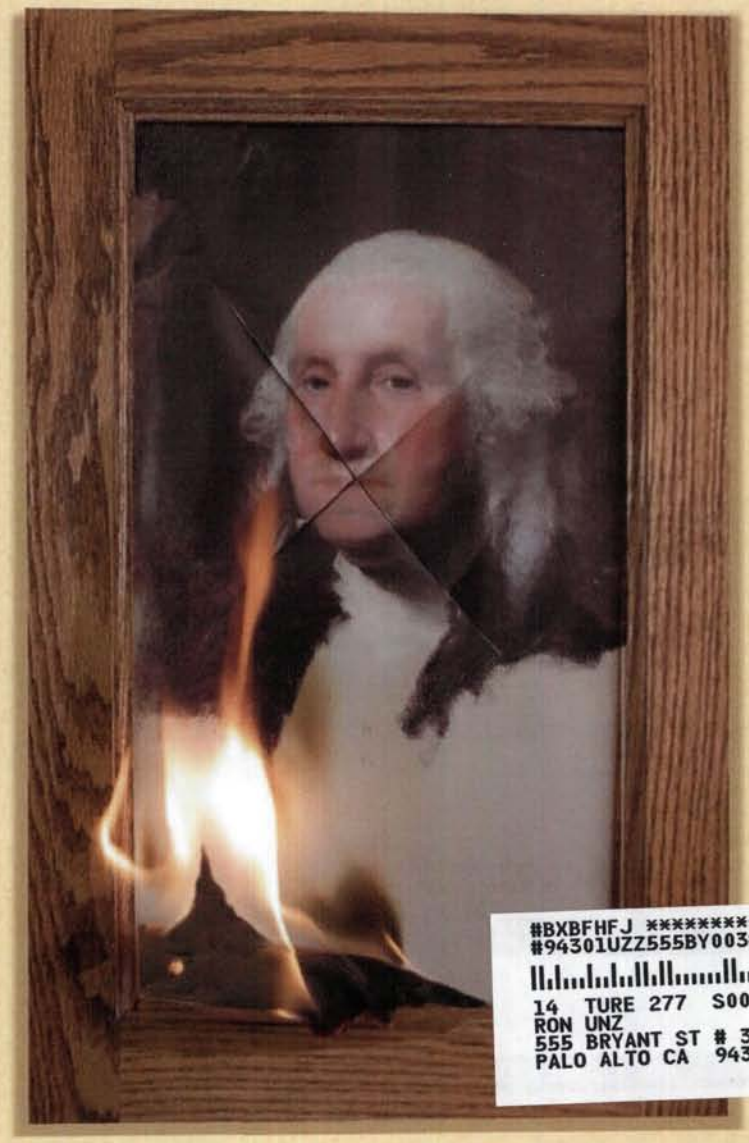

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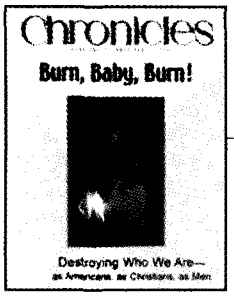

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On the Family

It is about time that a conservative magazine criticized the 1950's-style family (*Nuclear Family Fission*, November 2002). *Chronicles* seems to be the only one that has understood that the problems with our culture did not start with the cultural revolution of the 1960's. The 60's revolution came after the 50's because there was something wrong with the 50's that needed to be addressed. Of course, the solution was worse than the problem. Nevertheless, the nuclear family was never meant to carry the weight put on it by the flight to suburbia and grandma's flight to Florida. An extended family is needed to rear children properly—grandparents infuse traditions that the parents have yet to adopt fully, and aunts, uncles, and cousins also help to round out the family and fill in holes. Although it may not be the norm, there are plenty of children who have had a special aunt or uncle who understood them better than their parents did and played a significant role in helping them to understand their place in this world.

I would like to see more analysis on what we need to do to get back to a world where children are reared in a community—a true community where most everyone knows everyone else; where, if a stranger comes into town, it would be appropriate to ask him what his business is in these parts; where it would be inconceivable for a sniper to drive into town without anyone knowing, shoot someone, and then just drive away.

The various authors in your November issue have come to some conclusions about recreating community, ranging from turning off the TV (preventing the mass culture from taking over your local culture) to refusing to take a job in a place too far from home. These are very good suggestions, but what can you do when you have exhausted all your savings looking for 18 months for a job in the area in which the grandparents of your children live? When a job is offered to you from across the country, can you afford to reject it? Or, equally bad, even if you are able to remain in your community, what can you do when many of your family members and friends move out for better job opportunities? Or, worse, what do you do when all of your extended family seem to have the habit of turning on the boob tube every evening? One person does not a community make.

Furthermore, how do you address the rich man who says that community is just an insurance policy for the poor? These elites have left their communities to live in isolation in fancy suburbs so they do not have to take care of others and have others meddling in their business. They say that community is overvalued and complain about the more negative sides of it—people in need asking to borrow money and others sticking their noses in their business. Many of them do not care about paying 40 percent of their income in taxes, because the other 60 percent is sufficiently large for them to satisfy all of their wants. They would rather not be bothered than pay much less and have to focus on the needs of others. They say that they have more important matters to attend to; they work 60 hours or more each week and do not have time for community. They have sufficient funds to fly their immediate family home for the holidays and sufficient time to focus on their nuclear family, but that is all. Would these people actually benefit from community? How can we convince them? They enjoy being philanthropic, as long as that means going to expensive black-tie events and mixing with others who are wealthy. Getting involved with someone truly in need—that is a different story. If we cannot convince the rich that they need community, then community may be gone for good as a societal norm.

—*Anthony Santelli*
Scarsdale, NY

On *Macleans*' Account

Don't you guys ever give up? Sean Scallon ("Letter From Canada: A Pocket Full of Sovereigns," *Correspondence*, November 2002) writes that, "From reading [the *Macleans*] account, you might guess that the sovereignty question in Quebec has been solved . . . that is what Canada's establishment, from *Macleans* on down, would like to believe."

What the *Macleans* article said, however, was "So, is Canada saved? Of course. No doubt about it. And can I get you in-

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terested in a swath of fine, pristine, just seasonally flooded piece of real estate in southern Louisiana?" The sarcasm may be about as subtle as a speech by Andrei Vyshinsky, but even the most pointy-headed reader could not miss it.

To describe Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's maneuvers as "Lincolnesque" is bizarre. Imagine Lincoln handing out millions in grants to save bankrupt Southern plantations, insisting that all federal facilities in the South hire only whites, and directing the U.S. Postal Service to refer to Southern states as being in the "CSA," even while they remain part of the United States.

—Lionel Albert
Knowlton, PQ

Mr. Scallon Replies:

The point of my article was to ask: What kind of sovereignty do Quebecers really want? What kind of society do they really want? And how can these desires be realized? Those questions must be the focus of the PQ or the new L'Action Democratique du Quebec (ADQ) party. Whether *Macleans* believes the sovereignty debate has been settled does not matter. The Clear Question Act and Chrétien's determination to keep his home province within the fold make full-blown independence a remote option. The Québécois who desire greater independence should seek out a leader with a vision of how a sovereign Quebec fits into the broader Canadian framework. Such a vision may provide inspiration for other Canadian regions, especially the West, to aspire to the same thing.

On P/E Ratios

David A. Hartman's "Wall Street's Turn" (*Vital Signs*, December 2002) accurately outlined several factors that drove the U.S. stock market to extreme valuations in the late 1990's, and, as an equity portfolio manager, I found his insight to be both refreshing and a welcome respite from the utter nonsense of the mountebanks at the brokerage firms with whom I deal on a daily basis. However, I would like to take issue with Mr. Hartman's claim that the "most obvious misinformation that brokers propagated" was in switching from valuing stocks on P/E ratios based on reported earnings to P/E ratios based on forecast earnings. According to finance theory, the current price of a stock is the sum of its future discounted dividends. (In the case of stocks that do not pay dividends, the theory supposes that every business enterprise will eventually run out of new investment opportunities and the excess cash thereby generated will be returned to the shareholders to invest.) In order to calculate the expected dividend stream, analysts estimate a company's future earnings and apply an appropriate dividend payout ratio. Having made these projections using such financial statistics as earnings trends, asset values, and cash flow—all of which Mr. Hartman cited as relevant data—the investor compares the stock's current market price to his expected future earnings per share. By comparing the resulting P/E ratio on forecast earnings to the stock's own historical P/E valuation range, the P/E ratio of similar companies, and the P/E ratio of the market overall, the investor then has a base (but far from the only base necessary) to evaluate whether to purchase or sell. Conservative investors will also look at the stock's price as a percentage of the company's net worth (the price-to-book ratio) as well as its dividend yield, to name just two other basic valuation parameters.

Rarely do professional investors focus on the P/E ratio based on reported earnings, since the stock market is an efficient market—though, admittedly, the degree of efficiency is arguable. If we accept that the stock market is even minimally efficient (meaning that all relevant and ascertainable information is already reflected in stock prices), then evaluating stocks on the basis of their P/E ratio based on reported earnings is like driving a car while using the rearview mirror to steer. Hence, investors and analysts build models to calculate what a firm might earn in the future, something that the market may not yet have incorporated into a stock's price. The real problem with the P/E ratio based on forward earnings was the ludicrous projections from the investment banks' carny barkers (a.k.a. equity analysts) and their cheerleaders on MSNBC and CNBC and all the other complicit media lackeys who transformed the stock market of the late 90's into a giant casino with nary an Indian reservation in sight. Ultimately, each investor is responsible for knowing what he pays for a stock in terms of its valuation—the P/E ratio on whichever basis he prefers, depending on his belief in market efficiency, price-to-book ratio, dividend yield, *etc.* If amateur investors had spent as much time doing simple equity analysis as they did reading *TV Guide*, then many of the investment horror stories in the press today would have been, at the very least, not quite so bad. *Caveat emptor.*

—Mark G. Brennan
New York, NY

Mr. Hartman Replies:

Mr. Brennan's defense of investment based on rosy forecasts of earnings reminds me of the sad story of the divorcée whose physician was amazed to find that she was still chaste. She explained that her former husband was a liberal politician: "All he did was sit on the bed and tell me how great it was *going* to be."

My complaint with the huckstering of securities concerns the substitution of similarly rosy forecasts for the information necessary to making an informed decision on an investment's current circumstances, future prospects, and intrinsic value. I provided a list of the relevant data required to make such an assessment, not just P/E ratios.

Of particular concern was the shameless reporting of *forecast* P/E ratios in place of *historical* P/E ratios without ever drawing investors' attention to the sleight of hand. Mr. Brennan fails to address the subsequent escalation of such mirages with the substitution of P/E ratios based on EBITD—earnings before interest, income taxes, and depreciation.

Of course, the phony accounting and reporting of corporate earnings contributed to the phony forecasts. But this does not explain continual forecasts of soaring earnings during the past four years of stagnant or declining actual earnings. Without relevant historical information, misinformed investors continued to support Wall Street's cheery forecasts with their hard-earned savings.

As Mr. Brennan notes, both the forecast of earnings and the appraisal of analysts' forecasts require the scrutiny of the trends of historical data, thus confirming my contention that investors denied historical data were denied full disclosure.

Alas, given unreliable prognostications, both the unfortunate divorcée and Wall Street investors fell for a line of "bull." Ironically, however, it was they, not she, who were "taken to the bull."

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Affirmative Agitprop

The University of Michigan is now the scene of the most important battle over affirmative action since the Bakke case at Stanford, settled so inconclusively some 25 years ago by the Supreme Court. There is absolutely no question that Ann Arbor's undergraduate and admissions policies are based on a principle of racial preference that, in parallel cases (discrimination in favor of whites), has been repeatedly declared unconstitutional by federal courts. In addition to traditional selection criteria based on academic ability and achievement, Michigan also gives serious consideration to both ethnicity and low socioeconomic status (which is very often a codeword for race). This means, in the case of the law school, that black applicants are over 250 times more likely than white candidates to be selected.

Defenders of affirmative action in general and the University of Michigan in particular make the same three points: First, a diverse student body is desirable; second, without affirmative action, universities would become far more "white" than they are today; and third, virtually all successful minority members owe their careers to affirmative action. If the last two points were true, then diversity would hardly be so desirable as the University of Michigan's officials are claiming. If blacks, nearly 140 years and five generations after the end of the Civil War, cannot make it on their own, they never will. It does no good to cite the historical record of slavery and discrimination. "Other people," as Jesse Jackson once said so memorably in another context, "have suffered too." The Irish, the Chinese, the Sicilians, and the Vietnamese boat people have their own stories to tell. The Irish and Sicilians are doing very well; the Chinese and Vietnamese (who have been in the United States less than one generation) are doing better than well. If blacks continue to believe that they, despite all the resources mobilized on their behalf, cannot succeed without affirmative action, it is because they think of themselves as losers. This is a grave insult to the many black professionals who have succeeded on their own, often *in spite of* affirmative-action policies that raise unfair suspicions about the competence of black doctors, lawyers, and scientists.

Ethnic diversity has never been a legitimate goal for a university, nor is it the real goal of the University of Michigan. Colleges and universities (like all schools) have two primary functions. The second, in order of importance, is to pursue higher learning and maintain the level of civilization through research, teaching, and study. Merit is the only relevant principle of selection in the competitive search for truth and excellence. That academic administrators now talk about "diversity" as an objective that supersedes excellence is all the evidence we need to know that they have betrayed one of the main purposes of the university. This should come as no surprise to anyone who has ever met a college president or dean.

The first and more important goal of higher education is to create the conditions not for cultural diversity but for a flourishing dominant culture. The medieval university was a purely Christian institution, while, at 18th-century Oxford, neither Catholics nor dissenters were allowed, and, although they have been regarded as educational clubs for rich men's sons, English (and American Ivy League) universities have always been open to the poorer of the middle classes who displayed talent and aptitude.

The actual "poor"—if, by *poor*, we mean bums, vagrants, moral anarchists, alcoholics, and trailer trash like our former president from Arkansas—were not welcome. Why should they have been? The university is a corporate community whose values and traditions are passed down from one generation to the next. Large numbers of outsiders—if they really are outsiders, namely, people who do not value truth, hard work, self-discipline, and cleanliness—will, in the short run, dilute and, in the long, obliterate the university as an institution. Today, alas, it is no longer the moral and intellectual quality of *students* that is the main problem but the low social, moral, and intellectual class of a large part of the professoriate of all universities.

My low opinion of university professors was formed in the hard school of my experience as student and teacher, and it was confirmed, some years ago, when I debated affirmative action at Ann Arbor. My teammate was a philosophy professor from Jamaica, and, when I brought up standards, he announced that he did not trust the testing process. After all, he had taken many IQ tests and had never scored above 68, and yet he held a chair at a major university. "*QED*," I murmured under my breath. My teammate then abandoned my side when I made the following simple argument:

> Normal people always favor the group to which their children belong, and it was only natural for the white middle class to privilege its own children. However, I—like most white middle-class Americans—have cheerfully subscribed to the notion of a colorblind society in which people will make their own way in life, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, and religion, solely on the basis of their own merits. If, however, you demand that one group be privileged over another, then I shall support the group to which my children belong. Do not ask me to discriminate against my own children, because no policy could be more immoral.

My philosopher teammate, looking at me as if I were crazy, declared that he could not follow my the argument. How could he, if his IQ really was 68?

The hippie faculty, now in their 40's and 50's, hooted and stamped their feet to drown me out. "Look at them," I told the students. "Look at your intellectual mentors, these apostles of free thought. Now, you will know how to judge the propaganda they feed you in the classroom."

And propaganda, not racial justice, is, after all, the point of every policy in higher education, not simply affirmative action and not only at the University of Michigan. These policies have little to do with race and everything to do with the project to replace the institutions of Western civilization with the unchallenged orthodoxy of so-called multicultural diversity that is the end of all culture and all diversity. —*TJF*

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A DRAFT is being proposed by Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY), who opposed the congressional resolution supporting war in Iraq. He lost, so now he wants to conscript young people into the coming conflict to ensure that Americans "shoulder the burden of the war equally."

Reinstituting conscription is bizarre on its face. America currently deploys the most powerful and effective military on earth. The all-volunteer force (AVF) combines extraordinary high-tech weapons with dedicated soldiers, professionals who are substantially brighter and better educated than their draft-era counterparts were. In 2001, nine out of ten Army and Navy recruits possessed high-school diplomas; high-school graduates accounted for 96 percent of Marine and 99 percent of Air Force enlistees. In contrast to its draft days, the military takes virtually no one who does not have at least a GED and does not score in the top three of five mental categories on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. Real equality would require lowering the military's standards.

Equally important, the AVF is staffed by soldiers who want to be there. A draft military cannot let the discontented leave. Discipline, performance, and readiness would all suffer if today's servicemen were just counting the days until their involuntary terms ended.

Some draft advocates, like Representative Rangel, spin the virtues of a "citizen soldier." But four million young people turn 18 every year, while the military inducts fewer than 200,000 recruits. A draft that took five percent of those eligible would be far more arbitrary than today's volunteer system.

True, many conscription supporters, including Charles Moskos of Northwestern University and Jeffrey Smith, one-time general counsel to both the CIA and the Senate Armed Services Committee, suggest instituting mandatory national service, where those not drafted would be forced into the Peace Corps (or some domestic equivalent) to empty bed pans, shelve library books, file government paperwork, or, experience suggests, hand out political flyers. But what kind of free society conscripts citizens to perform social work and sacrifices their liberty for what would be the government's biggest pork-barrel project ever?

At least serving in the military serves the commonweal. Teaching literacy to poor kids is noble, but it is an act of charity, not a patriotic act. Many other "national service" jobs are not even personally enriching, however. And threatening to jail someone unless he picks up litter in a park is a frivolous abuse of government power and a bizarre way to promote love of country.

The worst lie told by conscription advocates about the AVF is that it is an underclass military. For instance, Rangel claims that "A disproportionate number of the poor and members of minority groups make up the enlisted ranks of the military, while the most privileged Americans are underrepresented or absent."

If he believes that conscripting five percent of 18-year-olds would magically create equality, he also probably believes that he owns the Brooklyn Bridge. Children of the elite would still game the system. Moreover, conscription will not alter the composition of the career force. Since blacks (but not Hispanics) are more likely than whites to make the military a career, they would remain overrepresented.

Surveys find that the socioeconomic status of servicemen's families tends toward the middle. Soldiers actually read at higher levels than their civilian counterparts do and are equally capable of going to college. The AVF is a force that does represent America. Conscription would bring in more young people who feel alienated from the country, something not likely to "bring a greater appreciation of the consequences of decisions to go to war."

The belief that the United States is rushing into war because no one knows anyone in the military is a desperate attempt to hide the fact that Rangel's own Democratic Party has offered no effective opposition to the Bush administration's policies. With the call-up of tens of thousands of reservists—and with an estimated 265,000 more likely to be activated in the event of a war in Iraq—the impact has been felt across the nation. Indeed, reservists come from all professions and tend to be well established in their communities.

The AVF actually makes it quite easy for critics of the President's actions to make their case: Simply convince potential recruits that a war with Iraq is bad policy. Conscription allows an administration, like that of Lyndon Johnson, to maintain the flow of troops despite growing criticism of a war. A volunteer military allows 18-year-olds to shut down any war by simply refusing to sign up.

Charles Rangel has been in Washington too long: Forcing people to fight a war is a curious means of opposing that war—especially when a draft would lower the quality and effectiveness of the military, making it harder to win. Now, on the eve of conflict, is the worst time for Washington to roil the military and society with another grand social-engineering scheme.

The most obvious reason to maintain the AVF is practical: It is the best way to raise the finest military. The most important reason to reject a draft, however, is moral. What sets America apart from totalitarian hellholes such as Iraq is her dedication to individual liberty; conscription sacrifices the very value that we are supposed to be defending.

—*Doug Bandow*

IRAQI CHRISTIANS are paying the price of the Bush administration's desire to remove Saddam Hussein. The Iranian Revolution and the rising influence of militant Islam have already forced the secular Iraqi dictatorship to make concessions to proponents of Iraq's Islamicization, but the threat of a U.S. attack, together with a widespread feeling in the Arab and Muslim world that Washington's "War on Terror" is, in fact, a war on Islam, have prompted Saddam to play the Islamic card in an attempt to shore up support for his regime at home and in the Muslim world. To that end, the Iraqi regime has recently put the property of Christian churches under the management of its Ministry for Islamic Property; expanded an age-old rule that forces the conversion of Christians married to Muslims to include children from previous Christian marriages, regardless of age or desire; enacted rules making it more difficult to offer Christian religion classes—currently taught in "totalitarian" Iraq in *public* schools with Christian majorities; and decreed that the non-Arab, non-Muslim parents of newborns must use Arabic and Islamic names for their children.

U.N. economic sanctions have also aided the Islamic revival in Iraq: The hardships of daily life in the embattled

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country have naturally turned the Iraqis to their traditional religion. As reported in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, Iraq now ranks 126th out of 174 countries surveyed on the U.N. Human Development Index, just one place above Lesotho. In 1991, Iraq was ranked 91st. And the country's traditionally Muslim peoples are flocking to mosques. One U.N. official noted that, "Before, Iraq was a secular country; this has changed." For example, a 30-year-old woman, the daughter of a U.S.-educated academic, has taken to wearing the veil, shocking her family. "I have no work even though I have a diploma," she says, "no boyfriend because young men my age are out of work and cannot think of marriage or the future . . . The Quran is my refuge." *Allahu Akbar* ("Allah is Great") now adorns the Iraqi national flag.

Meanwhile, Iraq's Christians fear that they will be the first victims of a war that might dismember the country, unleashing ethnic and religious conflicts that Baghdad had previously suppressed. Tariq, a Christian merchant in Baghdad, told the French weekly *Marianne* that "If the United States goes to war against our country . . . [t]he Wahhabis and other fundamentalists will take advantage of the confusion to throw us out of our homes, destroy us as a community, and declare Iraq an Islamic nation!" If recent history is any indication, Tariq has cause for concern: The Shiite uprising in southern Iraq during the Gulf War—encouraged and then abandoned by Washington—targeted Christians. Many Christians had supported Saddam's regime, in spite of creeping Islamicization, as their best hope of survival in the Islamic Middle East.

Life has never been easy for Iraqi Christians, a community of around 800,000 mostly Catholic and Orthodox believers, but the secular Ba'ath regime has largely suppressed outbreaks of anti-Christian violence, and Christians, especially Assyrian Catholics (the predominant Christian group, called *Chaldeans* in Iraq), have served in prominent state posts under Saddam. Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, is a Christian.

The Chaldeans are an ancient people, many of whom speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus, in addition to Arabic. Converted to Christianity by St. Thomas the Apostle, the Chaldeans later espoused Nestorian doctrines until reunified with Rome in the 16th century. Today, they belong to the Chaldean Rite of the Roman Catholic Church. Classical Aramaic is used in the Chaldean liturgy.

The largest group of Chaldeans is concentrated in Mosul, in northern Iraq, formerly a major Mesopotamian trading hub on the route from India to the Mediterranean, called *Nineveh* in the Bible. Mosul lies in the United Nation's northern "Safe Haven," which is dominated by the Muslim Kurds. According to Iraqi Christian sources, Kurdish paramilitary forces have conducted a terror campaign against Christians living in the Safe Haven, which has included assassinations of Christian leaders and expropriations of land held by Christians. This campaign has largely been ignored by Western media, the United Nations, Washington, and the U.S.-backed Iraqi National Congress, which portrays itself as the defender of democratic values and of Iraq's minorities.

The August 15, 2002, murder of a nun in Baghdad and the desecration of the convent in which she lived served as a warning to the Christian community of Iraq, which justifiably has little faith that the administration of a "Christian" American President will come to its aid or even has any concern for its fate. On Christmas Eve of last year, an Iraqi Christian mother and her nine-year-old daughter worshiped at Mosul's Clock and Latin Church, built in 1872 by French Dominicans. She told a *Washington Post* correspondent, "We are praying to God to protect us and our children." A priest echoed her fears: "We're afraid the Kurds will be here and the Muslims will be here. We don't know what the situation will be." In Mosul, Christians have already begun packing away their most precious antiquities to protect them from the pogroms of the Muslims and the bombing of the Americans.

—*Wayne Allensworth*

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH in the United States must regard 2002 as one of the most traumatic years in Her history. Any Catholic who hoped that the media might eventually find a new subject for horror stories would have been further disheartened this past January, when television and print media suggested that a whole new chapter was about to open in the ongoing abuse scandals. After a year of cases reputedly involving child abuse and "pedophilia," the headlines suddenly screamed of the victimization of nuns, who apparently were being violated in astonishing numbers. Within days of the original story, the claim that 40 percent of American nuns had been raped or molested, usually by priests, had become a social fact, part of the common currency of charges against the Catholic Church. With solemn determination, American lawyers began to face the task—thankless but, nevertheless, immensely profitable—of litigating on behalf of this new category of victims.

It might already be too late to stem this particular tide, but before we get too far into this latest "crisis," we should note that the whole Nun Affair presented by the media is profoundly misleading and founded on very weak evidence. The fact that claims were broadcast so widely, and in such hysterical terms, is stark testimony to the loathing with which much of the U.S. media seems to regard the Catholic Church and Her clergy.

The Nuns' Story originally had quite reputable roots. In the mid-1990's, a group of researchers at Jesuit-founded St. Louis University undertook a large-scale survey of sisters, of whom 1,100 responded. That is a large sample, likely to be representative of the wider population. The researchers were careful to distinguish different types of misconduct and varying grades of severity. Where they ran into a problem was in using language that normally carries implications far beyond the strict technical meaning. For instance, if someone says, "My daughter was abused," that phrase conjures up nightmare images of criminal molestation that may fall short of actual rape but would, undoubtedly, be very traumatic for the victim and her family. Some of the nuns responding to the survey were, in fact, reporting assaults of this kind. One woman said that "a priest fondled one of her breasts during confession." By any conventional standard, that represents assault, and the offender is and should be liable for criminal penalties.

Although the researchers spoke repeatedly of abuse or victimization, however, only a small minority of the cases they reported could really be understood in this way. In fact, the St. Louis survey strongly recalled those now notorious reports of the 1980's in which various feminist academics claimed that some mind-bogglingly high number of women had been subject to rape, molestation, or sexual assault. Just what was the rate of abuse? Well, what would you like? A quarter of all women? Half? Just choose your survey. What was happening, of course, was that researchers were defining *assault* in some hopelessly vague sense and then finding

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that large numbers of women were agreeing that, yes, this had happened to them.

And the St. Louis study definitely included such very broad categories. To quote the report in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (January 5): "The first [category], child sexual abuse, was defined as any sexually oriented contact with a person of the same or opposite sex where the target is younger than 18. The second, sexual exploitation, was defined as any sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or nonverbal sexual conduct that occurs when a woman entrusts her property, body, mind or spirit to another person acting in a professional role. The third, sexual harassment, was defined as any unwelcome sexual advance that affects employment decisions, interferes with work, or creates a hostile or intimidating work environment." Note that, in each of these categories, the definition largely depends on the subjective interpretation that a given individual puts on a particular event. One woman may not even notice a nudie calendar in an office; another might think it a powerful sexual threat. One woman may scoff at a request for a date; another might decide she has been harassed or exploited. Responses can vary just as widely to a hand on the knee, a late-night phone call, an invitation to get a drink. And the "child abuse" category seems to include the startling claim that any sexual interaction with a girl under 18 constitutes abuse. As written, that certainly includes "petting" with another teenager after the prom. With terms and definitions so hopelessly vague, it is amazing that the reported proportion of "victims" was anything less than 100 percent.

Against this background, just what horrors did the survey reveal? First, priests and religious were not, in fact, terribly likely to abuse. Twenty percent of nuns reported being victims of "child abuse" (*sic*), but mainly at the hands of nonclerical male relatives. Around eight percent of nuns claimed some kind of "exploitation" by priests or other nuns, but this conduct included virtually any behavior that the individual might construe, plausibly or not, as a sexual advance. Taking a still more nebulous category, around five percent of nuns reported some kind of "harassment" from clergy or religious. In each category, clergy and religious represented only a small part of the overall problem of victimization.

Based on this survey, we can reasonably say that, over the decades, nuns have faced a problem of unwanted sexual advances, though it is far from clear that they are more exposed to them than are women in any other profession or career. Nor is there any reason to believe that priests, religious, or other nuns are terribly likely to abuse—though the tolerance of lesbianism in more liberated orders might open the way to greater harassment. We can reasonably read the St. Louis survey and say: *This* is a crisis?

Nothing in the report conceivably justifies the media reports last January that—while not actually falsifying evidence—lumped together very different kinds of activity to generate a crisis of "sexual victimization." The headline story in the *Post-Dispatch* repeatedly implied both that vast numbers of nuns were being raped and violated—rather than just placed in situations that some found embarrassing—and that the victimization was stemming from clergy of the ever-sinister Catholic Church. On the first count, one of the original researchers declared that "Catholic sisters are being violated, in their ministries, at work, in pastoral counseling." This point was reinforced by the vignettes used to illustrate the story, such as the tale of the priest whose hands wandered during Confession. Reading the news story casually, we would undoubtedly assume that molestation or rape was the fate of the "forty percent" of nuns who "have suffered some form of sexual trauma." And once a neat figure like 40 percent enters popular discourse, it tends to live on, despite all subsequent efforts at debunking. *Didn't you know that 40 percent of nuns have been raped? Experts have proved that.*

And who has been guilty of this systematic mass rape? The original study made it relatively clear that clergy represented only a minority of misconduct; in the news stories, however, priests were front and center. To quote the *Post-Dispatch* once more, "Already shaken by a yearlong sex abuse scandal involving priests and minors, the Roman Catholic Church has yet to face another critical challenge—how to help thousands of nuns who say they have been sexually victimized." That sentence is little short of brilliant. It says nothing inaccurate—the Church is indeed shaken; nuns may have been sexually victimized—but the juxtaposition implies that the Nun Crisis is, in fact, a subset of the larger pattern of abuse, in which priests molested and bishops hushed up the crimes. And, lest it be thought that I am drawing extravagant conclusions, it was fascinating to watch the headlines that other papers composed when they picked up the syndicated *Post-Dispatch* story. Repeatedly, they presented the story as if priests were raping and molesting nuns—and in legions. In its headline, my local Knight-Ridder newspaper gave prominence to three key words—*Nuns, Abused,* and *Priests. See? Those priests are at it again. Aren't altar boys enough for them?*

The St. Louis survey is a profoundly unsensational document that does not paint a hostile or even controversial picture of the Catholic Church. In fact, it was little noticed when it was originally reported *in 1996*, or when summaries appeared in learned journals two years afterward. It is only in the aftermath of the recent child sexual-abuse crisis, which reached its height in Boston, that the media decided to exploit this old story to put another nail in the Catholic coffin. The current attention focused on this nonstory is a telling illustration of how far the media is prepared to go to attack the Catholic Church and how many people are prepared to accept these charges without question. The only remaining question is: Why don't they just quit stalling and reprint *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk?*

—*Philip Jenkins*

OBITER DICTA: This month, we debut our third new column at the back of the magazine. ***The Best Revenge*** details the attempt to battle modern-day puritans by, as the saying goes, "living well."

Our poet this month is **Sally Cook**, an artist from Silver Creek, New York. Miss Cook's paintings have been exhibited across the United States for over 40 years in such venues as the Albright/Knox Museum, the Bronx Museum, the NYU Student Center, and the World Trade Center. Some of her works belong to the William H. Littlefield Collection at Harvard University and the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as several other public and private collections nationwide.

This month's art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

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by Thomas Fleming

Living the Jacobin Dream

In 1793, the Jacobins, surfing the wave of Parisian mob violence, intimidated their less resolute colleagues into eliminating both the principle of monarchy and the existence of its politically superfluous incarnation, Louis XVI. Not content with killing a living king and pronouncing a death sentence *in absentia* on all the princes of the blood who had escaped with their lives, the revolutionaries were determined to rewrite the past by abolishing the enduring symbols of the French nation. Walter Scott, in his *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* observes:

> The name of king being pronounced detestable, all the remembrances of royalty were to be destroyed. . . . The royal sepulchers at St.-Denis, near Paris, the ancient cemetery of the Bourbons, the Valois, and all the long line of French monarchs, were not only defaced on the outside, but utterly broken down, the bodies exposed, the bones dispersed, and the poor remains, even of Henry IV of Navarre, so long the idol of the French nation, exposed to the rude gaze, and irreverent grasp, of the banditti who committed the sacrilege.

Guidebooks casually allude to some of the devastation: the tombs of the Merovingian Franks at St-Denis destroyed; the remains of Bourbon royalty buried at Val-de-Grace dug up and scattered; the most ancient church in Paris, St-Germain-de-Près, turned into a saltpeter mill for making gunpowder (15 tons stored in the abbey blew up in 1794, destroying much of the church's library and works of art); Notre Dame's "gallery of Judean kings" destroyed (the mob supposedly mistook the 28 statues for portraits of French kings).

The revolutionaries wanted to make the past, even more than the future, a *tabula rasa* on which they could scrawl their puerile obscenities. Even the calendar had to be reinvented. It was over 500 years after the birth of Christ when Dionysius Exiguus, calculating the date for Easter, decided to use the Savior's birth instead of the founding of Rome or the reign of Diocletian as the starting point. Dionysius' method of dating was not adopted until the time of Charlemagne, and, even then, it took centuries for the Christian system to become universal in the West. The Jacobins, by contrast, took only a few months before adopting (in October 1793) a system that was as "rational" (*i.e.*, inhuman) as it was stupid: twelve 30-day months, each divided into three decades, with five or six additional days at the end of the year. Gone are the weeks—and the Lord's Day (*dimanche*, *domenica dies*) that began them—but also gone are the names of days and months that preserved the links with the ancient world.

The calendar was a bourgeois triumph, giving only one day of rest at the end of each of the three decades. Workers were less enthusiastic. The last five or six days of the year were devoted to new "holidays" commemorating such bourgeois principles as "Virtue," "Genius," "Work," and "Reason." The greatest accomplishment, however, was severing the French nation from her Christian past.

The revolutionary revision of religion reached its absurd apotheosis in the substitution of deism for the Catholic Faith. The first step was the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which, as François Furet recalls, alienated many Catholics who had grudgingly accepted the political revolution. Father Emery, Superior of the Society of St-Sulpice, had counseled obedience to the government, but, when he failed to preach the prescribed sermon in support of the new Civil Constitution, the priest was arrested and menaced more than once with death, while his grand church, only recently completed, was taken over by the revolutionaries.

All over Paris and throughout France, the churches' precious art treasures were vandalized, and gold and silver communion vessels were stolen and used in mock-ceremonies that travestied the Mass. The high point was reached in the Festival of Reason, in which the goddess was played (in Scott's words) by "a dancing girl of the Opera, with whose charms most of the persons present were acquainted from her appearance on the stage, while the experience of individuals was further extended."

Even Jacobin atheists were offended by such mummeries, and Robespierre, who had been secretly encouraging a group of cultists, decided to kill two birds with one stone. By representing himself as the supporter of a *reasonable* religion, he could appeal to the more sober republicans *and* arrange for the murder of his blasphemous rivals. Unfortunately, Robespierre's new religion, the Cult of the Supreme Being, offered neither the comforts of religion nor the dignity of skepticism, and the heathen processions of girls carrying flowers, women bearing vegetables, and men wielding sticks and swords—all singing hastily composed "hymns"—could not have inspired much confidence in Robespierre's political genius.

As Jules Michelet observed, there were no great men in the French Revolution, only mediocrities. Robespierre, for all his vaunted "virtue," was petty, cowardly, vindictive, and—above all—vain. Spoiled by his sisters and later by the women who vied for his strictly fraternal favor, young Maximilien was interested in members of the opposite sex only as worshipers of his genius. Visitors to his elegantly appointed apartment soon noticed that the drawing room was dominated by portraits, which, upon closer examination, proved to be all of one man. When their host entered the room, they realized who was really the "supreme being" of the natty little Jacobin's universe.

Few of the revolutionaries were either as "virtuous" as Robespierre and St-Just or as ferocious as the butcher of Lyons. A more typical case was the former barber Joseph Villetard, whom the mob sprung from Chatelet prison, where he was doing time for theft. By adroitness, he climbed his way up to the heights of the National Convention, and, in 1797, he was sent to Loreto to steal the famous Madonna. An English correspondent, who met him as a respectable member of Napoleon's government a few years later, describes his shenanigans:

> In the execution of this commission he displayed a conduct worthy of the littleness of his genius and the criminality of his mind. The

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wooden image of the Holy Virgin, a black gown said to have appertained to her, together with three broken china plates, which the Roman Catholic faithful have for ages believed to have been used by her, were presented by him to the Directory, with a cruelly scandalous show, accompanied by a horribly blasphemous letter. He passed the next night, after he had perpetrated this sacrilege, with two prostitutes, in the chapel of the Holy Virgin; and, on the next morning, placed one of them, naked, on the pedestal where the statue of the Virgin had formerly stood, and ordered all the devotees at Loretto, and two leagues round, to prostrate themselves before her.

We must always remind ourselves that the entirely sordid activities of the French Republicans were the fulfillment of the Enlightenment project, whose objects were freedom of thought (that is, the freedom to be a servile follower of the Encyclopedists), social and political equality (the destruction of all authority), and a society based purely on reason (the destruction of Christian civilization). Of course, the Enlightenment was not a uniform movement; some of the leaders (such as Voltaire) toadied to the rich and powerful, and, while some were atheists, most were anticlerical Catholics and deistic Protestants. But the vulgar dream—as old as Descartes and the invisible Rosicrucians he dreamed of meeting—was the abolition of human history (along with the Christian religion) and the creation of a new Adam, as perfect and fresh as an homunculus brewed in an alchemist's flask.

Such a work of instauration required a corresponding elimination of the signs of the old Adam: the days commemorating saints and feast days, the effigies of the ancient kings, the actual body and person of the living king and queen and their nearest relatives. Even Philippe Egalité, Masonic grandmaster and satanic whoremaster (murdered by the Terror in 1793), could not, by a life of treachery and dishonor, overcome the taint of his direct descent from Louis XIII.

Voltaire, Diderot, and their Jacobin disciples knew who their true enemy was. It was not the king *per se* (who might be a philosophe like Frederick II of Prussia) or the principle of monarchy. It was not even the abstract idea of deity, which might be necessary to the social order. The *infame* they wanted to wipe out was Christ, "*le consubstantiel*" (as Voltaire constantly refers to Him), Who shares our humanity. Many Muslims, pagans, and deists approach Christianity's sublime conception of God; it is in their degrading conception of man that the danger of their religion is revealed. Christians believe that man was made in God's image and redeemed by the God-Who-Became-Man. Different churches may disagree over the propriety of sculpture in the round or the permissibility of cremation, but respect for the full human person, body and soul, is universal among Trinitarian Christians, and the images of man—of kings and saints—made in the image of God are the targets of the iconoclasts' rage. It is no accident that the enlightened Jacobins were mass murderers who attached more emphasis to divorce than to marriage (Sophie Arnoult called divorce "the republican sacrament") or that their spiritual and political descendants have fixed upon "abortion rights" as a defining issue.

Napoleon, who saved the Revolution from itself, restored the Christian calendar in 1806. (He also, while persecuting Pius VII, restored the French Church.) The revolutionaries of 1848 reintroduced the republican calendar, which Louis Napoleon, appealing both to Catholics and to the cautious bourgeoisie, again eliminated. But the swings of the pendulum, from revolutionary iconoclasm to revolutionary consolidation, do not obscure the fact that the French Revolution lasted (by Furet's reckoning) nearly 100 years, and that every true revolution since 1789 has embarked upon a similar course of iconoclasm, against both Christian symbols and the living presence of the past.

Iconoclasm, both literal and metaphorical, was the signature tune of the Bolsheviks, who brutally murdered the royal family, destroyed churches, converted the greatest Russian monastery into a museum of atheism, and rewrote the history not just of Russia but of the human race. Other Marxist-atheists in Mexico, China, Vietnam, and Cuba followed suit, persecuting the Church, destroying monuments of the past, replacing the traditional calendar with an endless series of numerical dates commemorating this uprising or that hero of the revolution.

Even in Italy, where the postwar government represented a coalition of Catholics and communists, you cannot walk through a town without seeing a Viale A. Gramsci or a boulevard named after some inflated triumph of Italy's own Jacobin revolution, the Risorgimento. Italian fascists were almost equally fond of celebrating the dates of *their* revolution, and it is a sign of the Jacobin origins of fascism and Nazism that both Mussolini and Hitler adopted the methods and style of the French terrorists.

And what of Americans, so eager to escape the shackles of their history that they, too, have rewritten both calendar and curriculum? America, where Martin Luther King, Jr., and his civil-rights "revolution" takes precedence in the calendar over Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and even Lincoln; where Christian symbols are removed from schools and public squares and "Happy Holidays" has replaced "Merry Christmas"; where a school in Louisiana repudiated the name of George Washington; where some state legislatures have removed the fine old flag under which brave Americans from the South fought in what they and many non-Southern Americans regarded as the noble cause of constitutional liberty and where the citizens eagerly accepted the lie that Thomas Jefferson had sexually abused a slave woman; where Labor Day, Veterans Day, and Teachers' Work Day and the Monday closest to Columbus's birthday have usurped the place of religious holidays and where Independence Day has been given the Jacobin title "Fourth of July"; where self-described conservatives (such as William J. Bennett) call for an new "patriotic" calendar that will express the nation's "democratic values."

What can be said of this America, if not that, over the course of 150 years, we have gradually achieved the revolution which Rousseau imagined and for which Jacobins and Marxists fought and slaughtered? The way back—if there is to be a way back—will not begin with a counter-revolution that will commemorate its own set of uprisings, heroes, and martyrs but with a quiet determination to restore the Christian calendar in our own lives; to display Christian symbols in our homes, shops, and offices; and to teach our children and friends the stories and traditions that the Jacobins have done their best to destroy. c

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Take Two, And Call Me in the Morning

by Sally Cook

To cultivate the rich and powerful
Is to live life by the hourful
Never thinking what's been done
Seldom changing what's begun

Art, today, means anything
We want it to, that's if you bring
Your appetites and leave your sense
Camping in some desert tent

I say desert for that's where we
Are now camped, aesthetically
Living on worny fruit, half ripened,
And the nicest little stipend

From our friends in government.
To wonder where the yellow went,
Or red, or blue, might just inspire
A bit of conflict with desire

Brought about by lazy fools
Taught to make mistakes in schools
Learning at the feet of some
Whose education's yet to come

When this deconstruction's done
More final than the setting sun
For all that was and what might be
The norm becomes disharmony

Art, where are you? Are you dead?
Or do you sleep, as some have said?
I ask the therapeutic question
Could it just be indigestion?

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by Roger D. McGrath

The Myth of Red Brotherhood

Second only to the myth of Indian as ecologist is that of red brotherhood. Although physically similar, the Indian peoples of what is today the United States were a diverse lot. There was no common language, culture, or identity. A few groups of Indians evolved political organizations—the Iroquois League of the Five Nations was the most sophisticated—but most did not advance beyond tribal groups who generally lived in a state of war or intermittent hostilities with neighboring tribes. Many tribes did not even have a common name for themselves, going by terms that simply meant "people" or "folks" or something that differentiated them only from beasts in the forest. They did have names for their neighbors, though, referring to them as the "slithering snakes" or "sons of shedogs" or "little adders" or other, equally insulting, pejoratives.

White encroachment aroused no general Indian hostility. To the contrary, whites were often welcomed as allies by one tribe against a nearby enemy. Most of the time, when Indians fought, they fought each other, not whites. Fighting whites was only a temporary interruption of their traditional intertribal warfare—just as fighting Indians was only a temporary interruption of white intertribal warfare. The English and the French spent more time, money, and materiel fighting each other in the New World than they did fighting Indians.

In the first major Indian-white conflict in New England, the Pequot War (1637), most of the tribes in the area allied themselves with the English settlers against the Pequot. The Narraganset, the Niantic, and even the Mohegan, who were cousins of the Pequot, were allies of the English and sent hundreds of warriors to fight the Pequot. The Pequot were a powerful and ruthless tribe who had arrived in the area only three or four generations earlier. Through the most brutal warfare imaginable, they had reduced the older tribes of the region to vassalage or slavery. The very name *Pequot* means "destroyers of men"—an appellation well earned.

Now, with the aid of the whites, the subjugated tribes were anxious to wreak vengeance. The Mohegan especially enjoyed decapitating Pequot. Having observed the Mohegan practice, Capt. John Mason, leader of the colonial forces in Connecticut, noted, "Happy were they that could bring in their [Pequot] Heads to the English." As the tide of battle turned against the Pequot, their leader, Chief Sassacus, and 40 of his warriors sought refuge with the Mohawks. Instead of giving the Pequots sanctuary, the Mohawks held the Pequots prisoner, torturing and then decapitating them. Chief Sassacus' head was delivered to the whites as a token of friendship.

The Pequot War was not an exception but the rule and continued to be so until the last Indian resistance was extinguished. Even Tecumseh's great Indian confederation was essentially a creation of the British during the War of 1812 and collapsed as soon as they withdrew their support. Nor did conditions change in the trans-Mississippi West. The first significant conflict, the Arikara War (1823), was typical of conflicts until the end of the century.

The Arikara—or *Rees*, as the French fur traders and American mountain men called them—lived in earthen lodges in villages along the Missouri River in North Dakota. They depended mostly on agriculture for food, raising corn, squash, pumpkins, and beans. They fortified their villages for protection against horse-mounted marauding Sioux by building barriers of driftwood and willow branches. The Rees traded with other Indians and with whites, mostly fur traders or trappers. An unpredictable bunch, the Rees more than once attacked travelers after feigning friendship and a willingness to trade. They did so in 1823 when a party of 30 American mountain men, paddling canoes loaded with furs, stopped to trade. Only half of the mountain men survived the surprise attack, and many of those who did were badly wounded. When the survivors reached Missouri and told the tale of Arikara treachery, Maj. Benjamin O'Fallon, the Indian agent for the Great Plains, organized a force to punish the Rees. Included in the Missouri Legion were 80 mountain men, Col. Henry Leavenworth and 230 soldiers, and more than 700 Sioux warriors.

The Sioux could hardly contain themselves. So great was their enthusiasm that they galloped ahead of the Missouri Legion and engaged the Rees in front of the Arikara village. When the whites arrived, they could not fire for fear of hitting their Sioux allies. Seeing the mountain men and soldiers take up positions around the village, the Rees retreated inside their fortifications. Behind them, they left a dozen dead Rees. The Sioux pounced on the bodies and quickly hacked them to pieces. Then, after tying cords to the severed arms, legs, hands, and feet, the Sioux dragged the body parts in a triumphal procession around the village. The whites watched the grisly spectacle with fascination and horror, not realizing they were witnessing only the opening act.

An old Sioux chief soon appeared with one of his wives. Immediately, in front of the village and with a war club in her hand, the squaw began raining blows upon the body of a dead Ree. At the same time, the chief taunted the Rees for allowing a squaw to club the corpse of one of their braves. The final act came when a Sioux shaman arrived, crawling on all fours and snorting like a grizzly. Then, with his own teeth, he tore mouthfuls of flesh from the body of a dead Ree.

Night fell before any more fighting could take place. The next day, the whites poured fire into the village, while the Sioux stripped the Arikara cornfields. Presently, the Rees emerged from their village, signaling their desire to parley. Colonel Leavenworth jumped at the chance. The Sioux, fearing they would have no more opportunities to kill Rees, were upset. When the calumet was proffered, the Sioux refused to participate. Smoke the peace pipe with the Rees? No way. The Sioux left for parts unknown. There was no red brotherhood.

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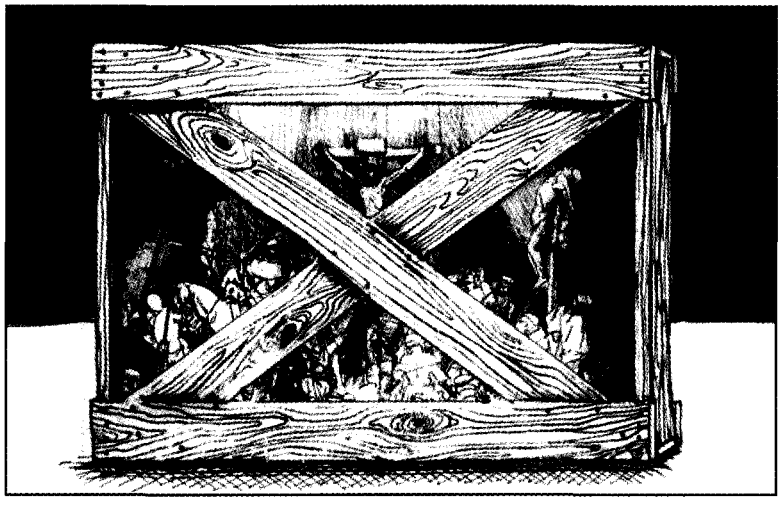
The Third Iconoclasm

The Ghost of Muhammad in the Church

by James Patrick



H. Ward Sterett

The two roots onto which Western Christendom was grafted proposed very different notions about depicting the gods. The Greeks famously made images of Athena and Zeus, always depicting them as man writ large, and were untroubled by this glaring anthroponorphism. Hebrew tradition, on the other hand, said nothing about making or worshiping images of God. It did, however, specifically forbid the making and worshiping of images of any creature on the earth, in the sky, or in the sea. (We can only presume that the images of the cherubim, which God commanded to be made, were not worshiped.) About making images of God and worshiping them, the Old Testament is silent, presumably because any attempt to depict God was bound to be inauthentic and would degenerate into idolatry. There was a kind of framed space in the Hebrew imagination that must remain empty. God's actions might be known, but men could not see His face and live.

Then an event promised by Isaiah occurred in the little town of Bethlehem. God was with us. A portrait had been painted within the empty frame. Suddenly, we knew the face of God. We beheld the glory of Christ, the glory "as of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." Show us the Father, Philip asked, and His reply was, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." Jesus Christ is, in Saint Paul's words, "The image of the invisible God." Dante wrote that, in the midst of the Three, he saw One who has our form.

Gnosticism, Christian Science, Islam, Freemasonry, philosophical idealism, some Protestant sects (to varying degrees), and the religion represented by the metaphysics shelf at Barnes & Noble are all spiritual religions. Christianity, however, is not a spiritual religion: It is an incarnational mystery. When Saint Paul spoke of the Holy Spirit, he was speaking not of some intellectually vaporous principle but of an order of glory more real than the hardest diamond in Creation.

Today, Anglo-Saxons, American or British, tend to read Scripture and tradition with the eyes of iconoclasts because our respective histories were formed by iconoclasts who quite naturally encouraged such a reading; the Church, however, was rich with images as soon as She had walls on which to paint them. Some of the images in the catacombs antedate Constantine, and the earliest surviving Christian image was made when a prince of the Constantinian house still ruled in the imperial city. (I refer to the image of Christ enthroned among the Apostles in the New Jerusalem, the four living animals hovering on the cerulean sky, depicted in the great mosaic in Santa Pudenziana at the foot of the Esquiline Hill, which, arguably, can be dated to the 390's.) After that, there was a rich outpouring of images, evident now especially in Rome, the city that best maintains continuity with the fourth century. Most Christian images were iconic renderings of texts of Scripture, especially from Saint John's Apocalypse. The Church desired that Her children be given images because God had become man and because we are creatures of imagination, immersed in the very flesh and the very history that Christ came to redeem.

In the penumbra of the apparent triumph of the Crescent, Christian image-making rested on the fact that the Word of God, having taken human flesh, became man: not that God revealed Himself to be man, or that Jesus represented the divine in human life (a distinctly modern proposition), but that God took mankind to Himself as man—one Person, perfectly possessing both a divine and a human nature.

The Incarnation changed human history. Until the 16th century, time would be noted *anno salutis humanae*, "the year of the salvation of the human race." The Roman Empire was the greatest effort mankind could make, but it was ultimately fu-

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tile, possessing the sadness that belongs to an order thought to be permanent and victorious but which, in reality, is always collapsing. Suddenly, across this chaos, there was joy in the world, as though Creation had been transposed into another, happier key. At the center of this happiness was the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the face of Christ on the apse.

Naturally, such a doctrine would be resisted as "a scandal to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks." The Jews had become convinced that the empty frame at the top of Creation could never be filled with the face of God; to insist otherwise derogated God's transcendent glory. That Jesus made Himself the Son of God was an outrage deserving death. For philosophic Greeks, the God of the philosophers and the gods of religion could hardly become a Jewish prophet and teacher. The divine idea might be represented by an image, but that image was not the original. For the Platonic and Gnostic side of Greek thought, the eternal God could not take on flesh, since, by definition, the realm of fleshliness was the realm of change and shadows.

The history of the Church is the history of an heroic defense of the Incarnation, beginning at Nicea (325), where the Arian idea that Jesus was merely *like* the father was defeated by the great word *homoousion*—"of one substance" with the Father. The same anti-incarnational idea was present in Nestorius, who was convinced that God could not be born of a woman; and it was evident in its purest form in the great iconoclastic controversy of the eighth and ninth centuries, brought on, in part, by the advent of Islam. In 686, Calif Yazid ordered that all crosses in Egypt be destroyed and that church doors bear the following inscription: "Mohamet is the great apostle of God, but Jesus also is the apostle of God. But truly God is not begotten and does not beget." This rejection of the Trinity and the Incarnation is the foundation of the Muslim hatred of images.

The question then arises: How could the last of the anti-incarnational heresies almost take Eastern Christendom by storm? While the Eastern army did admire the monotheistic fervor of its Muslim enemies and the internecine quarrels between Monophysites and Catholics did weaken the empire, I propose that the true cause of the temporary triumph of iconoclasm was the secularization of the Church. When Christian nerve fails, the Church is secularized, and the denial of the Incarnation and the associated rejection of images follows. The rulers of this world, unless they are pious children of the Church, hate the Incarnation, its precision, its particularity, and its power—as well as all the refracted doctrines that surround and confirm it: the Real Presence, images, relics. Some Christian doctrines seem less important than others, but the denial of any amounts to the denial of all. We might think that the scriptural practice of the use of second-class relics—for example, taking handkerchiefs that had been in the possession of the Apostles and using them as a means to restore health (Acts 19:12)—is unimportant. But the principle that it enshrines—that holiness is mediately incarnate in the world and in *things*—if denied, brings down the entire house of Christian dogma. Similarly, the lawful and salutary use of images is not as important as the fact of the Incarnation; but to deny the lawfulness and, indeed, the necessity of images is to deny the Incarnation.

There have been three great outbreaks of iconoclasm in the Mediterranean world and its dependencies—in the eighth, 16th, and 20th centuries. Each was a cluster of ideas and events in which the destruction of images of Christ and the saints was accompanied by the secularization of the Catholic Faith; its subordination to the prince, the civil authority, or the culture; the suppression of the Mass (on at least two occasions); and, always, the abandonment of traditional liturgical order and space. The first iconoclasm involved the persecution of a pope and the deaths of monks, faithful, and a patriarch on behalf of an imperial religious policy inspired, at least in part, by a desire to make the state religion less odious to Jews and Muslims. Images were whitewashed and plastered over, and the central axis, which connects Baptism at the church door with the altar of God, was suppressed; that pattern was subordinated beneath the great dome that represents a religion not of pilgrimage, path, and history but of mere presence. The second iconoclasm saw the subordination of the Church to the English monarch and the German nobility; the suppression of the Mass; the rejection of the Real Presence by a spiritual religion of commercial virtue; and the destruction of altars, windows, and statues. The third iconoclasm, still at work today, is a half-conscious attempt at subordinating the Catholic Faith to the popular culture, which involves the destruction of the liturgical path in favor of surreal and "challenging" spatial arrangements born of an art hatched outside the Church. It replaces the Faith of the Church with a *faux* humanitarian religion of banal affect and traditional images with vulgar banners and an iconography of Christ-as-ascending-ghost that betrays its Gnostic origins.

There is one thing new about the current iconoclasm. The older iconoclasm dwelt on the impossibility of the Incarnation; the modern iconoclasm dwells on the scandal of particularity. In the older iconoclasm, nothing in the created order could be divine; in the new iconoclasm, born of the marriage between the Hegelian *Weltgeist* and idealism, everything and everyone is divine. If you are a Catholic, *you* are the one present in the tabernacle—a thesis certain to issue in profound atheism, since we all know better. This new iconoclasm is the theology of Calif Yazid in different garb; everything is divine, everything is spiritual, and God is nowhere to be found. In the Christian account, God chose one man of faith from distant Haran; one troublesome people, who were great because God loved them; one woman who would say, "Be it done unto me according to thy word." God became man at one time and in one place; the God-Man chose one apostle to shepherd the Church; and Christ chose to be present personally in one rite. He chose to save through water and specific words, not through ideas; He left a moral regime in which one thought may damn and one sorrow save.

There is good news. History suggests that the despair of iconoclasm, when Christian civilization attacks its images and despises the Incarnation, may be a prelude to better days. The first iconoclasm was followed by the conversion of the North, the triumph of Orthodoxy in the East, and the apotheosis of Catholic thought that linked Anselm to Aquinas. The second was followed by the Council of Trent and the martyrdoms that made Roman Catholicism a missionary faith, triumphant from the Spanish New World to Oceana. Like the earlier ones, the present iconoclasm is sponsored within the Church on behalf of the culture. Like the others, it is militant, virulent, dominant in a failed ecclesiastical bureaucracy, and opposed only by Rome. Its victims are not monks, popes, and patriarchs but little children. There is no despair, no self-hatred greater than that which attacks not only the crucifix and the Sacred Heart but the image of man in a little child. Like its two predecessors, however, this third iconoclasm may presage a gathering together of the indefeasible strength of the Incarnation to renew once more the face of the earth. c

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American Icons

From Lincoln to the Surf Nazis

by Roger D. McGrath

"Thou shalt not portray a white male in an heroic light." Thus reads the first commandment of the politically correct. Ever since the late 1960's, the cultural Marxists have been engaged in a drive to destroy American heroes—if they are white males. This was not always a difficult task. Historians from an earlier generation had already begun to chip away at these heroes. Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt were vulnerable to revisionist interpretations because they had often been treated not just simply but simplistically. Complex and imperfect human beings were reduced to pure and virtuous icons—soft targets, made-to-order for debunkers and revisionists. What was a largely worthwhile effort to paint more sophisticated, nuanced, and penetrating portraits of American icons, however, became, in the hands of the cultural Marxists, a mission to destroy the legitimacy of the figures altogether—part of a broader effort to deconstruct Western civilization.

Why people become cultural Marxists and engage in such a mission is a question for psychologists. Do they hate themselves? Their parents? Their religion? What dysfunction causes them to loathe the nation and civilization of their birth? What trauma or alienation causes them to hate the things most of us love? I remember a strange, cynical, and cowardly character I first encountered in junior high school. He mocked all our heroes, from real life and on the silver screen. He took no joy in the triumphs of Americans. He soon found a little group of like-minded craven cynics. At the time, I could not understand how anyone could think like these kids. When I (and everyone I knew until junior high) watched *The Sands of Iwo Jima* and saw the flag being raised on Mt. Suribachi—with The Marines' Hymn growing louder—I had a lump the size of a grapefruit in my throat and goose pimples from head to toe. I did not know that there was any other way to feel. It stunned me to come into contact with kids who did not share my feelings. My shock turned to rage when they mocked the flag-raising. Mom, the flag, apple pie, and the Corps were honored in our household.

It took me some time to begin to understand, at least in part, what motivated such kids. I learned that they came from families who were far to the left of the American mainstream and that they themselves were pusillanimous to the core. I suspect they knew that they would never have the inclination to join the Corps nor the courage of those in the 28th Marines who assaulted Suribachi. Nor would they have the courage of a Washington or a Jackson or a Teddy Roosevelt. These men did not serve to inspire but left them frightened and intimidated. Their reaction to the heroism of such great Americans was to mock them in a clearly palpable attempt to protect their own fragile psyches. Years later, when political correctness was added to the mix, they were able not only to make fun of our heroes but to disparage, denigrate, and, ultimately, demonize them. Thus, George Washington is evil because he owned slaves; Andrew Jackson is evil because he fought Indians; Teddy Roosevelt is evil because he proclaimed the superiority of the white race. Even Thomas Jefferson is evil not only because he owned slaves but because, although there is no real evidence to support the claim, he bedded Sally Hemings. And so it goes, *ad infinitum*.

Accepting the standards imposed by the politically correct eliminates nearly every white man from our pantheon of heroes: South of the Mason-Dixon Line, most prominent and wealthy men were slaveholders; most men who lived on the frontier were Indian fighters; nearly all white men everywhere once considered other races inferior. If historians or others ac-

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cept politically correct standards and superimpose them on men who lived one or two hundred years ago, they will be led, inexorably, to the destruction of those same men. Some historians accept these standards—at least ostensibly, when writing biographies of famous figures—but also attempt to preserve the heroic status of those figures. This forces them to rationalize, occasionally in the most convoluted manner, the beliefs, statements, and actions of their biographical subjects.

While the stature of most American heroes has been diminished under the withering attacks of the revisionists and the cultural Marxists, Abraham Lincoln continues to enjoy an iconic status, and some of his supporters are cultist in their devotion. Yet Lincoln was certainly a "racist": He believed not only that the white and black races were strikingly different in both physical appearance and mental capacity but that Negroes, by their very nature, would never be able to live in equality among whites. Said Lincoln:

> I believe this government was made on the white basis. I believe it was made by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, and I am in favor of confining citizenship to white men, men of European birth and descent, instead of conferring it upon Negroes, Indians, and other inferior races.

He also said:

> I am not, nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office. There is a physical difference between the white and black races, which, I believe, will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. I as much as any other man, am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.

Although Lincoln hated slavery, thinking it a "monstrous injustice" and a bane to both the white and black races, he wanted all freed blacks sent to Africa or colonized on a Caribbean island or in Central America. He was a member of the American Colonization Society, which had, by the time he joined, shipped several thousand American blacks to Liberia. At the height of the Civil War, he was still exploring ways to ship *all* American Negroes overseas and only abandoned the idea when the U.S. Navy and others convinced him that, given the Union's resources at the time, such an ambitious undertaking was logistically impossible. Nonetheless, he thought the means to effect overseas colonization would have to be found, because any kind of integration with Negroes filled him and other whites with "natural disgust." He commonly referred to blacks as "niggers" in private and even, occasionally, in public.

For generations, historians have noted Lincoln's attitude toward blacks. The first to draw significant attention to it, though, was Lerone Bennett, Jr., in his essay "Was Abe Lincoln a White Supremacist?" published in *Ebony* in 1968. All of his information had long been available in numerous secondary sources. Bennett, however, was black, the article was published in a black magazine, and the time was propitious for an attack on a white man regarded as a hero by most blacks. In the late 60's, the establishment was being attacked by blacks and whites, left and right. Black rioters swept through city after city, screaming "Burn, baby, burn!" and radical black activists, such as the Black Panthers, were attracting large followings. Bennett's attack on Lincoln lent credence to the rhetoric of these radicals, especially those advocating the separation of the races.

Considering all this, it would, at first, seem surprising that Lincoln has maintained his iconic stature. However, most authors who have attacked Lincoln, for reasons distinct and separate from those of the craven cynics, black radicals, and cultural Marxists, have been Southerners, constitutionalists, and libertarians. The liberals and the politically correct have reacted by rallying to Lincoln's defense. Eric Foner, a leftist professor of history at Columbia University, did so in a 2000 *Los Angeles Times* review of Bennett's *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream*. Foner argues, gently and tactfully, that Bennett has produced a polemic that does not address the breath and depth of Lincoln—and I think Foner is right. On the other hand, Foner too quickly dismisses Lincoln's words and actions concerning racial issues, asserting that Lincoln simply shared the prejudices of the time. This is exactly what Lincoln did not do. He carefully thought through all of these issues and came to his conclusions after years of observation and experience.

Leftist reviewers and Lincoln cultists have not been so gentle or tactful when criticizing Thomas J. DiLorenzo's *The Real Lincoln*. DiLorenzo, a professor of economics at Loyola College in Maryland, argues that the Civil War was more about economics—the tariff, in particular—than about slavery and that Lincoln did not govern but ruled tyrannically and left us with a federal leviathan and less liberty. When Joseph Sobran finishes his book on Lincoln, which develops similar themes, I suspect *berserk* will be the mildest reaction of the Lincolnites.

Support from the left and attacks from the right make Lincoln's case anomalous. Although Lincoln clearly and unequivocally believed and stated that the Negro race was inferior and that the United States was a singular nation created for whites and their descendants in perpetuity, he presided over a war that not only freed the slaves but destroyed the social structure of the South, greatly diminished states' rights, centralized power in Washington, and created a secular religion of egalitarianism—all dear to the hearts of those on the left. Moreover, he died, using the word loosely, a martyr. He remains an American icon—despite the best efforts of black separatists, Southern conservatives, constitutionalists, and libertarians.

Lincoln has fared far better than George Washington, who has come under fire of late because he was a slave owner. In 1997, the Orleans Parish School Board removed Washington's name from an elementary school in New Orleans, in accordance with the board's policy that schools not be named for anyone who owned slaves. Berrengher Brechtie, the president of the school board, said, "The idea of kids going to a school named after a slave owner was demeaning. We wanted the kids to identify with role models from their own heritage." That Washington manumitted his slaves in his will apparently counts for nothing. Renamed in honor of Dr. Charles Drew, a black physician who developed methods to preserve blood plasma, the school is 99 percent black. The name change has done nothing to improve the school's abysmal academic performance. Despite boasting one teacher for every 13 students, the school's fifth grade (its highest grade level) scored only in the 14th percentile on the Iowa tests in 2000. Perhaps it is best that Washington's name is no longer associated with the school.

Washington was the first of several warrior presidents. He set the standard high. Standing 6'3" and big boned, he dwarfed

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most of his contemporaries. The stare of his blue-gray eyes froze people in their tracks. His years as a surveyor on the frontier, while only a teenager, made him rawhide tough. He understood the lay of the land and knew more about the frontier than all others, save trappers and Indian traders. His bearing suggested that he was not one to take a step backward. He was an accomplished rider and, despite his great size, was described as a graceful horseman. He strove daily to improve himself. Recognizing these qualities, Robert Dinwiddie, Governor of Virginia, made a 20-year-old Washington the adjutant of one of Virginia's four military districts in 1752. The next year, Dinwiddie selected him to carry the governor's message to the French, warning them to withdraw from the Ohio country. Leading a small party through incessant, pelting rain and a wilderness of forests and rivers, Washington eventually arrived at Ft. Le Boeuf, immediately south of Lake Erie. Changing out of buckskins and into his Virginia militia uniform, Major Washington presented the governor's missive to a French general. After days of delay, the French only agreed to forward the letter to Quebec. Washington used the time to record everything he saw: numbers of troops, deployment, the daily routine, Indian allies. With snow falling and the rivers beginning to freeze, Washington made his way back to Virginia. His military career had begun, and the French and Indian War was about to erupt.

Washington's first action—and the first action of the war—occurred the following spring when, leading a few dozen militiamen, Washington surprised a slightly larger group of French troops, killing ten of them and capturing twice that number. Washington was elated, saying that he had "heard the bullets whistle" and had found "something charming in the sound." Within weeks, he was promoted to colonel and made commander of the Virginia Regiment. He was 22 years old. Throughout the war, he fought against great odds, made mistakes and recovered to gain valuable experience, demonstrated great courage and an indomitable spirit, inspired confidence and loyalty in the men who served under him, and led from the front. He would go on to command the Continental Army, create a trained and disciplined fighting force out of those who survived the winter at Valley Forge, accept the British surrender at Yorktown, preside over the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, and serve as our first president. But the Father of Our Country owned slaves and is not fit to have his name on a grammar school.

Andrew Jackson, an iconic figure who has come under withering fire from the left over the last couple of generations, is my favorite president, not so much for his presidency but for his character and life. You would think that his humble beginnings—he was the first president not born into wealth—and contempt for artificial social distinctions might endear him to liberals. However, he was a brilliant success without government aid, fought Indians, and had courage that boggles the mind. On several occasions, Jackson was seen standing in the face of withering fire while rallying his troops. At Enotachopco Creek during the War of 1812, the Red Stick Creeks pounced on Jackson and his Tennessee militia. Some of the raw recruits broke and ran, but Jackson stood "Firm and energetic . . . his example and his authority alike contributed to arrest the flying, and give confidence to those who maintained their ground. . . . In the midst of a shower of balls . . . he was seen . . . rallying the alarmed, halting them in flight, forming his columns, and inspiring them by his example." His leadership turned the tide of battle and, eventually, put the Red Sticks to flight. Jackson lost 20 men, but the Red Sticks left more than 200 dead behind on the battlefield, and as many as 100 more later died of their wounds.

Jackson displayed such courage, cool nerve, willpower, and leadership throughout his life, yet today's American-history textbooks mention little of it. In more than a dozen textbooks that publishers have sent to me for review over the last two decades, I have found not one line on the battle at Enotachopco Creek. Their treatment of other American heroes is similarly neglectful.

I grew up in the aftermath of World War II, so the heroes of the 20th century's greatest conflict are of particular interest to me. I have a copy of *Life* from 1945. On the cover is a beaming, auburn-haired, blue-eyed, freckle-faced kid named Audie Murphy, the most decorated American soldier not only of World War II but of any war in our history. He had just turned 20 when the photo was taken—and he looks 15. He enlisted when he was 17 (the official record says 18), and, by the time he was only a few months past his 19th birthday, he had risen from private to 1st lieutenant and had been awarded 33 medals, including the Medal of Honor, the French Croix de Guerre, the French Legion d'Honneur, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Legion of Merit, three Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, and three Purple Hearts.

What he did in Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany pushes the limits of credulity. He could easily have been awarded another Medal of Honor and another Distinguished Service Cross. Yet Audie Murphy is not mentioned in any of the textbooks that I have received. Nor can I find America's first hero of the war, Colin Kelly; or the first ace, Butch O'Hare; or the leading ace, Dick Bong; or the top Naval ace, Dave McCampbell; or the top Marine ace, Pappy Boyington; or the leading submarine ace, Dick O'Kane. On the other hand, considerable space is allotted to subjects of little significance, except to achieve some kind of politically correct balance. It is difficult not to conclude that the authors and publishers fear portraying white men in an heroic light. Such portrayals just might inspire boys today to behave in a manner admired by their ancestors.

A couple of years ago, I took my family to see Michael Flatley's *Lord of the Dance*. We were thrilled and found the music, choreography, and performances inspired, even brilliant. The next morning, I read a reviewer who attacked the production as militaristic and fascistic. I laughed at first, but then it became clear to me that the reviewer had been frightened by what he saw—the Gaelic tribe on the march, tapping into ancient rituals and soul-stirring melodies. *We can't have that!*

In 1978, I saw the same reaction among several reviewers of *Big Wednesday*, a movie about surfing and coming of age. The book of the same name was written by Denny Aaberg, my childhood buddy. We practically lived at each other's houses in Pacific Palisades and began surfing together in the late 50's. Denny's story is closely based on our lives growing up and those of his older brother, Kemp, and other surfers in the Palisades, such as Lance Carson. John Milius helped turn the story into a screenplay and then directed the movie. It was supposed to be a slice of surfing life and of the struggle to accept adult responsibilities—and it is. However, some reviewers, ostensibly sane and rational, saw the movie as a celebration of neo-Nazis. One even described a principal character as having a "sleek Aryan hardbody." Hitler Youth? *And we thought we were just surfing.*

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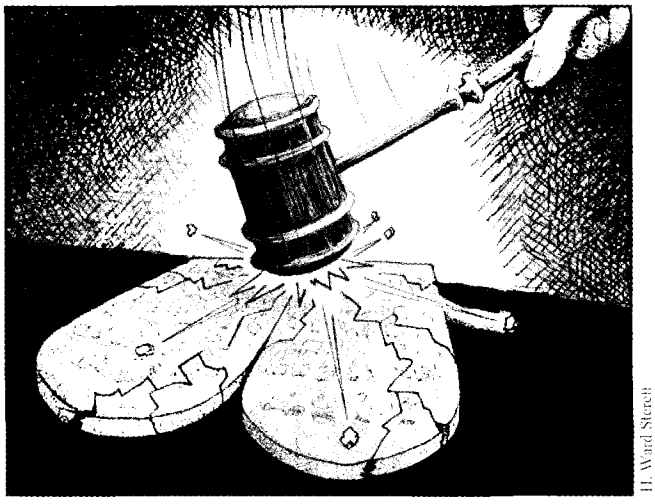
The Federal Courts, a Menorah, and the Ten Commandments

Whose Religious Iconography Is Constitutional?

by Stephen B. Presser



H. Ward Stench

A recent phenomenon in the United States is that no one knows any longer to what extent the country, our states, or our municipalities can participate in the display of such traditional religious symbols as crèches, crosses, menorahs, or even the Ten Commandments. Until the last half of the 20th century, no one seemed too concerned about the problem. Then—while retooling the Constitution with regard to criminal procedure, reapportionment, and racial segregation—the Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Earl Warren, declared, for the first time in U.S. history, that it was impermissible for states or municipalities to mandate Bible reading or prayer in public-school classrooms. The Supreme Court's rationale was that the First Amendment, which prohibited Congress from making any law "respecting an establishment of religion," ought to be interpreted as forbidding any state or local government from imposing any religion on its citizens. The amendment, declared the Court, quoting an 1802 letter written by Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptists in Connecticut, erects a "wall of separation" between Church and State.

There has been a spate of recent writing on the history of the First Amendment and on Church-State relations in the early republic. Even the academy is beginning to understand that Jefferson's view was not commonly shared, and, more importantly, that Jefferson himself had no doubt that the First Amendment only prohibited acts by the federal legislature, not those of the states. In the early 20th century, however, the Supreme Court began to declare that the 14th Amendment, passed in the wake of the Civil War in order to guarantee blacks the same property and contract rights and legal protection as whites, somehow fundamentally altered what the states could and could not do. The Court declared that the 14th Amendment's prohibition on any state depriving any person of the "equal protection of the laws," or taking any person's property without "due process," or depriving anyone of the "privileges and immunities" of U.S. citizens meant that most of the restrictions that had formerly been applied to the federal government by the Bill of Rights should now be applied to the states. This was unparalleled judicial legerdemain, since those amendments had been expressly designed to protect the states and their citizens in the exercise of self-government; to turn those amendments into tools that federal officials could use to dictate how the states run virtually every aspect of their governments was fundamentally to fly in the face of their original intention.

While there was, at first, some resistance to the Warren Court's bolder efforts in this regard, it is remarkable how this "Government by Judiciary," as one critic called it, came to be so accepted. Indeed, during the last 40 years, to point out the obvious ways in which the Court (particularly in cases involving religion) had misread the Constitution was to court ridicule among the *cognoscenti*. Most law professors and most judges seemed willing to have the Court essentially rewrite the Constitution according to the justices' opinions of what ought to be

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sensible public policy. Particularly, in the wake of the holocaust—in which many millions perished because of their religious identities—the Court seemed reluctant to impose any orthodoxy on U.S. citizens. By 1992, the Supreme Court had declared it impermissible for public high schools to sponsor prayers at graduations (even though this had been done without adverse comment for generations), and, shortly thereafter, the Court saw fit to ban even student-sponsored prayer at public high-school football games.

So sensitive had the chattering classes become on this point that, in the early 90's, when a Mississippi governor reminded the country that this was a "Christian nation," he was roundly excoriated. At the time of the Constitutional Convention, however, the governor's comments would not have been thought remarkable, and, even in the *Federalist* (the best contemporary guide to the Constitution), John Jay (who became the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court) observes that the country was blessed to enjoy a common religion. In a famous 1892 case, the Supreme Court even declared that America was a "Christian nation." In 1833, the most prominent constitutional scholar of the day, Justice Joseph Story, wrote in his influential *Commentaries on the Constitution* that, while the First Amendment barred the federal government from establishing any one sect as the national religion, Washington was certainly permitted to give aid and comfort to Christianity; moreover, he argued, support for religion generally was the duty of any sensible government.

This view, informed by history and common sense, did not prevail. Somehow, the historic reading of the First Amendment was transformed into a virtual prohibition on any federal, state, or local government aiding or promoting any religion. Still, Americans have not quite been willing to live under such a "Godless Constitution." Thus, every holiday season, there are battles over what can be displayed in our public squares. In 2002, the key cases involved a menorah in Cincinnati and the Ten Commandments in Alabama. Curiously, the federal courts permitted the display of the first and ruled against displaying the second. How can we reconcile this discrepancy?

The Cincinnati case was brought by two Orthodox Jewish groups who sought to display a menorah on Fountain Square Plaza. They had been prevented from doing so by a Cincinnati ordinance passed to keep the Ku Klux Klan from erecting a Latin Cross at Christmastime on the square. The ordinance gave exclusive use of the square to the city during the last two weeks of November, the month of December, and the first week of January. A traditional locus for political, civic, and cultural affairs, Fountain Square had long been the prime place for Cincinnatians to voice their views and display their icons, particularly during the holiday season. The city, seeking to maintain the holiday atmosphere, intended to mount a display including "two large Christmas trees, a skating rink, a concession kiosk, several small evergreens, and many decorative lights."

U.S. District Judge Susan J. Dlott determined that the Cincinnati ordinance was unconstitutional because it interfered with the Jewish plaintiffs' First Amendment right to engage in symbolic speech by displaying their menorah. The court conceded that the city had the right, in the public interest, to regulate speech in public forums but (following clear Supreme Court doctrine) not to regulate the *content* of speech, unless there is a "compelling" reason to do so and the regulation is "narrowly tailored" to achieve that "compelling" purpose.

The court correctly noted that the ordinance was designed "to eliminate speech which might be controversial or offensive to those visiting downtown Cincinnati." In a curious footnote, the court even suggested that

> one could argue that the distinctions here are based on viewpoint. The City's display promotes a secular, and arguably Christian, view of the winter holidays and emphasizes the joy and festivities attendant to that season. The [ordinance], on the other hand, excludes any speech, such as the Chabad's and the Homeless Hotline's which expresses another viewpoint, be it a Jewish one or one emphasizing the plight the homeless experience, even during the joyous holiday season.

In addition, the court called the city's planned display a "smorgasbord of secular, pagan, and arguably Christian symbols." More to the point, rejecting Cincinnati's implicit claim that there was a "compelling interest" in guarding against "controversial or offensive" speech during the holiday season and observing that a seven-week ban on all privately sponsored displays could hardly be characterized as "narrowly tailored," Judge Dlott enjoined the city from enforcing the ordinance and, in effect, ordered the city to permit the menorah. A federal appeals court reversed the trial court and ruled in favor of the city, but the U.S. Supreme Court, through the actions of Justice Stevens, reversed the court of appeals and reinstated the trial court's order. The ordinance was overturned, and the menorah was permitted.

On the other hand, when the chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, Roy Moore, installed in the rotunda of his court in Mobile a relatively small granite monument—paid for by private contributions—bearing the Ten Commandments and quotations from the Framers and from Blackstone on the moral and religious foundations of the law, he was ordered by a federal district judge to remove it. Justice Moore had previously become famous in Alabama as a lower-court judge who refused to remove a much smaller plaque of the Ten Commandments from his courtroom. Legal proceedings were begun against him then, but he managed to keep his plaque, since a lower federal court ruled that the plaintiffs suing him had no standing because they could not prove that they would ever be in his court and, thus, be affected by his plaque. Capitalizing on the fame this brought him and believing it to be his moral and religious duty, Judge Moore campaigned for chief justice as the "Ten Commandments judge" on a platform of reinstating religion and morality as the basis of law in Alabama.

As chief justice, Moore had sole authority to determine which items decorated the court's rotunda, and he also exercised that authority to place quotations by Martin Luther King, Jr., and Frederick Douglass on the walls of the rotunda.

Several lawyers who had been longstanding critics of the judge (aided by the ACLU, Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and the Southern Poverty Law Center) argued that the placing of the Ten Commandments in the rotunda amounted to an unconstitutional establishment of religion. Several other cases had previously found such displays on government property to be impermissible. In deciding the case, federal district court judge Myron H. Thompson faced a difficult task, however, because other judges had held that displaying the Ten Commandments did not violate the Constitution.

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Indeed, there are two engravings of the Ten Commandments in the U.S. Supreme Court, as there are in many state and federal courts across the land.

Nevertheless, Judge Thompson ruled that Justice Moore's Ten Commandments had to go. As he had before, Moore argued that the three plaintiffs lacked standing—they could not show any injury resulting from his display. The law on standing holds that, to quote Judge Thompson's own words, "the plaintiffs must suffer personal injury 'as a consequence of the alleged constitutional error, other than the psychological consequence presumably produced by observation of conduct with which one disagrees.'" That statement would seem to deny standing to the plaintiffs (three lawyers who regularly practice in the Alabama Supreme Court building), but Judge Thompson ruled that they had standing because each of the three found the monument "offensive," each "said the monument makes him or her feel like an 'outsider,'" and, further, "each visits the rotunda less frequently and enjoys the rotunda less because of the monument's presence."

Justice Moore's lawyers argued that the plaintiffs were not really offended by the monument but simply offended by Moore. And, since all of them are strong and successful civil-rights lawyers who are well established in their professions and practices, they could hardly be regarded as "outsiders." Still, Judge Thompson claimed to believe the plaintiffs. Because some courts had ruled that "An effect on an individual's use and enjoyment of public land is a sufficient noneconomic injury to confer standing to challenge governmental actions," he held that the purported injury to the plaintiffs' feelings and the diminishment of their "use and enjoyment" of the rotunda gave them standing.

That inflicting such an injury is a violation of the First Amendment would have surprised the Framers, not only because they, like Justice Moore, generally believed that it was appropriate to recognize the religious and moral foundations of the law but because what they sought to avoid was the establishment of a state sect that each citizen would be required by law to conform to or to support with his taxes. Nevertheless, since the cases involving prayer at public-school activities had been predicated on the kind of "psychological coercion" to which Justice Moore's adversaries claimed they were being subjected, Judge Thompson's ruling was not surprising.

Merely to have standing, however, is not to win your case, and the plaintiffs still had to show that any psychological harm caused by Justice Moore's monument violated the Constitution. For this, Judge Thompson turned to the frequently criticized but still current three-part test administered by many federal courts to determine violations of the Establishment Clause. The Establishment Clause says merely that it is impermissible for Congress to make "any law . . . respecting an establishment of religion." Nevertheless, for three decades now, the courts have used this simple and specific language to bar many religious displays. For a display to be permissible, it "must have a secular legislative purpose, . . . its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion, . . . [and it] must not foster 'an excessive government entanglement with religion.'"

Taking into account Justice Moore's previous political campaigning, Judge Thompson ruled that he had a religious purpose, not a secular one, in erecting the monument; that the monument was designed to promote Christianity; and that the fact that the monument had been paid for by funds donated at least in part by an evangelical church—with which Judge Moore continued to be associated—was "an excessive governmental entanglement with religion." To state this test is to reveal its plasticity. If a judge were more favorably inclined toward Justice Moore, he could certainly find, first, that Justice Moore's purpose was secular, as he believed in good faith that no secular legal order could survive without a moral and religious foundation (a belief he shares with the Framers); second, that he used the text of the King James Bible in displaying the Ten Commandments not specifically to promote Christianity but because it was the one historically most familiar to Americans and that, by erecting his monument, he neither advanced nor promoted any particular religion; and, third, that, once the monument was placed inside the rotunda, it required no further entanglement with any religious bodies. In other words, on both the standing and substantive issues, a ruling for Justice Moore would not have been out of line.

Justice Moore appealed Judge Thompson's ruling as well as his expected decision to require Justice Moore to pay the $704,000 in legal fees that the plaintiffs claim to have incurred. (Their case was couched as a civil-rights lawsuit, and federal law requires the loser in such cases to pay the winner's attorneys' fees.) Eventually, a federal court of appeals or the U.S. Supreme Court will have to settle Justice Moore's case, and, even if he loses (as he did before), he may refuse to cooperate, thus requiring President Bush to decide whether he wants to order federal marshals to remove the Ten Commandments from public display.

So how do we reconcile the two cases? An intriguing suggestion comes from a holiday brouhaha in New York, where the top lawyer for the New York City public schools has ruled that no Nativity scenes may be displayed, yet "The display of secular holiday symbol decorations is permitted. Such symbols include, but are not limited to, Christmas trees, Menorah's [*sic*], and the Star and Crescent." Andrea Skoros, a Catholic mother from Queens, supported by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, has filed suit against the school district, arguing that the permitted symbols are not secular but religious and that the district is violating the First Amendment's Establishment Clause by permitting them while prohibiting crèches. This attitude may explain why a menorah gets displayed in Cincinnati, while the Ten Commandments are barred in Alabama. (This is the conclusion reached by the Catholic League's William Donohue, who says that Christians should blame themselves for allowing their constitutional rights to display their symbols to be trampled. "Christians," he says, "are such wimps.")

The Cincinnati menorah case might also be distinguished from Justice Moore's on the grounds that the former involves an assertion by citizens of their right to "free exercise" of religion, while the latter is about the government's alleged endorsement of religion. This is mostly lawyers' pettifoggery, however; the real problem is that none of the federal courts' interference with state and local governments in matters of religion is justified by the First Amendment.

Most Americans claim to be not only religious but specifically Christian, and most Christians continue to believe that they live in a Christian country. This cognitive dissonance will only be resolved either when federal judges cease practicing judicial iconoclasm or when Christians conclude that their government opposes their religion. c

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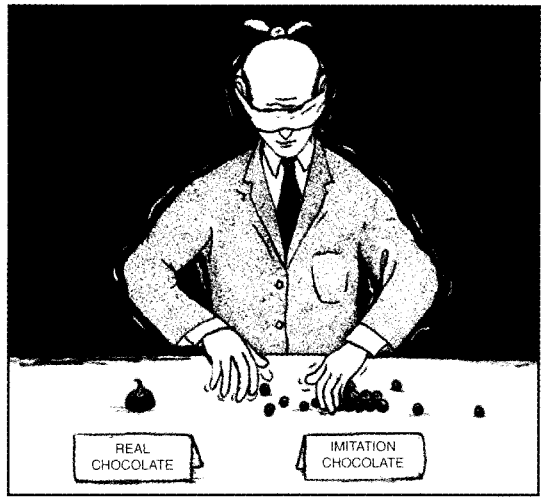
The Means and Meanings of Western Culture

by Andrei Navrozov

"Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep ye not silence."
—Isaiah 62:6



I am holding in my hands a *scatola musicale* the size of a matchbox, which somebody gave me the other day as a frivolous keepsake. You can buy one just like it in any souvenir shop in Venice for two, maybe three dollars. The thing is so cheap because it is made in some Oriental sweatshop, of course, but also because it is not really a music box in the conventional, nostalgic or grandmotherly, sense. More precisely, it is the guts of one, under a removable plastic cover. The mechanism is exposed, and, when you turn the little handle, you can see how the little tines catch on the little bumps, printed as though in Braille on the revolving cylinder:

Dark eyes, passionate eyes,
Eyes smoldering and bea-u-u-ti-ful . . .

I am but a poor, lovelorn Russian emigré, and I happen to like the tune it grinds out. Naturally, as one who has heard Zina—said to have been the last of the legendary Dmitrievich family of gypsies—sing the original at the Raspoutine in Paris, I understand that it is not the actual little tinkling sounds made by the little tines as they catch on the little bumps that I love, but the underlying reference to the original.

Yet the fact that the original is suited for mechanical evocation by such simple means—ta-ra-ta ta-ta, ta-ra-ta ta-ta, go the little bumps as they poke away at the little tines—suggests that it, too, is only of value to me insofar as it is, in its own turn, a reference to some other, still more evanescent and irretrievable original. *That* original is the smell of freshly made sturgeon *ukha* and the beads of condensation on the crystal decanter of bison-grass *nastoika*; it is careless, already tipsy guests being freed from their furs and eased into their seats by smart waiters; it is the crackling of frost outside and the gleam of linen and silver within. And it is also, needless to say, the real-life dark eyes of your imagined *vis-à-vis*, as she laughs maddeningly at some remark that the joker to her left has dared to whisper into her alabaster ear, throwing back her head until a shameless wave of candlelight . . . And so on, in that vein:

Ochi chernyie, ochi strastnyie,
Ochi zhguchiye i prekrasnyie . . .

Yet that original, too, I realize, has little definitive value beyond a certain narrowly epicurean appeal, which is not even all that inextricably bound to a specific epoch. Thus, it would be fair to say that in the starched cream of the waiters' jackets under the camomile light of the wall sconces of Harry's Bar in Venice *circa* 2002, in the delicate steaming of the *risotto alla primavera*, and in the topaz coolness of the Tocai in the ice buckets, an aesthetic appetite less capricious than my own might find the necessary elements to recreate a nostalgic Russian scene *circa* 1914, to say nothing of a nostalgic European scene *circa* 1929. So the ultimate original that I am searching for, and drawing my pleasure from, is not the maudlin scene I have begun to sketch but the novels, the poems, and the plays in which that scene, in one form or another, has figured in the last hundred or so incorrigibly Romantic years, and consequently—since culture is endlessly self-referential and, therefore, indivisible—in the entire record of human history since Genesis, Gilgamesh, and Homer.

The important thing to note here, however, as I crank up the

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little box, is the general direction of my thinking. My associations and ideas have moved from the simple to the complex, and then to the still more complex and possibly more inchoate, as though in an opium dream. This is not, as the modern saying goes, politically correct. Moreover, in a certain very real sense, this mode of ratiocination runs contrary to the mainstream of the West's cultural development since at least the Renaissance.

If the human mind were not as complex as it is, culture would be a mere plaything. After all, its supreme function is to make life interesting. The truth, however, is that, when we fall in love, or eat *risotto alla primavera*, or say prayers before bed, we willingly and knowingly place ourselves in a constitutional compact with our cultural progenitors, an arrangement that is all the more binding for being unwritten. Without its protection, there is neither love, nor food, nor God. Indeed, it was in Stalin's Russia, for the first time in history, that a sociologist established the ideal scientific norm of consumption (of rye flour, of course) for the average healthy male (meaning a Soviet army soldier), and, in his own crypto-Tolstoyan way, the good Dr. Strumilin was right on the money. Twenty-nine hundred calories a day when alive, and six feet of ground when dead, is all a man really needs. No opium for *Stalin*'s masses.

We like to suppose that totalitarian abnegation of this kind is alien to us in the West. We are free. We are alive; we think; we listen to music. We fall in love; we taste rare wines and sample exotic victuals. Sometimes we even pray. And yet, I submit that the road chosen by Western culture has been taking us—in a direction which, as it happens, is contrary to that of a growing, ripening, fruitful thought—from complexity to simplicity, from life-giving chaos to deadening rationality, from color and light to regimented shades of drabness. From the intoxication of a wild night with the gypsies, in short, to the metal guts of a wind-up mechanical toy.

The inexorable slide from the complex to the less complex and, finally, to the downright simple—a type of regression that, in my view, characterizes the unstoppable forward march of Western civilization—is not unlike the regressive movement from the original to the copy and, finally, the imitation. Put aside, for the moment, the fact that, in social and political terms, such regression is usually described as "development" or "progress," for bleating its own praises is an inalienable right of every herd.

The complexity of the human mind, while the brain is alive, is as good a measure of infinity as any. Yet, when its owner dies, we are left with the relative simplicity of a few kilograms of organic matter. The complexity of social relationships in, say, the Republic of Venice under the Doge Pietro Orseolo may be illustrated by the Pala d'oro altarpiece in the Basilica of San Marco, which is composed of 1,300 great pearls, 400 garnets, 90 amethysts, 300 sapphires, 300 emeralds, 15 rubies, 75 balas rubies, 4 topazes, and 2 cameos set into three-and-a-half meters of gold and Byzantine enamel. Yet whatever residual complexity is in evidence in these parts 1,000 years later, it is obviously undeniable that the larger social and political realities of present-day Venice are effectively subsumed by the monochrome sameness of federal, European Community, and transnational structures.

But as monochromatic and uniform—compared to medieval Europe—as modern democracy is, nothing is simpler that totalitarianism. "Conform or drop out," says democratism; yet here the dissenting individual may at least find consolation at the prospect of disturbing the social norms of moribund uniformity, as he dreams the sweet dream of dropping out of society in some new and interesting, original, or even conspicuous way. "Obey or die," commands totalitarianism; and here the individual dissident has no such consolation. He knows that death, especially under torture and unseen by the world, can never be interesting or original. Besides, dying is itself an act of simplification. Thus, it is enough to observe that the modern democratic polity is rectifying itself at an ever-quickening pace to conclude that totalitarianism, perhaps the most straightforward and rational among all forms of social organization, is the logical terminus of this movement.

A salient feature of Western culture—in which I incorporate by reference the irreversible degeneration of the 19th-century politics of qualified democracy into the 20th-century charade of shameless democratism—is its insistence on quantity at the expense of quality. This has always distanced the West from the notion of the original, reconciling it with the ideas of imitation, verisimilitude, and popularity inherent in the copy. A Russian icon—any Orthodox icon, so long as it has been consecrated—is a sacred object and is said to be "not made by human hand" (*acheiropoetic*). By contrast, a religious painting by Rembrandt, even when it should lay a similar claim to uniqueness, is not thought to forfeit any of its spiritual power when turned into engravings "for every home." But wait, what Rembrandt! The Scripture itself is thought to gain when "translated out of the original tongues" into a simplified vernacular, which, with the passing of centuries, is rendered ever more simple and accessible. Now, perhaps it is too literal-minded to say, with the early opponents of air travel, that, if the good Lord had wanted us to fly, He would have given us wings. But only an ignorant lout would deny that, if God had wanted the Holy Writ to be more accessible, He would have managed to achieve this without Mr. Coverdale, to say nothing of the gay and lesbian ministry.

As with the holy image, so it is with everything else of which our culture is composed—novels, plays, poems, ideas, images, customs, music, dress, food, love, and, finally, life itself. Admittedly, the cumulative momentum of simplification, or deterioration, is different in every case, still depending, to some considerable extent, as much on the mode of human expression in question as on the minute particulars of time and place. Thus, it is still possible, under certain circumstances, to find a nice crunchy apple in Kent, or real tomatoes in New Jersey, or flavorful salt in Messina; it is still possible, on occasion, to read a new book that is the issue of the aggregate refinement—which is to say, sophistication and complication—of the human mind; it is still possible to buy something of complex associative value using mass-produced paper money backed by little more than the mendacity of the government that has sanctioned the engraving; and it is even possible, for certain uncommon persons, to live and to love in complicated, not streamlined, ways that may involve praying in private chapels, or drinking from paper bags under railway bridges, or dining at the Raspoutine with singing gypsies. It is equally clear, however, that the entire thrust of modern civilization is *against* such life and such love.

The dominant predilection of the West, as I say, is for the quantity of copies, not the quality of the original, and, like an epidemic malady, this rapacious force now redoubles its accelerating and broadening sweep with every passing decade. Gone forever are the days when the cynical promise of a chicken in every pot, already back then a piece of laughable dema-

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gogguery, beckoned the electorates as a kind of hysterical mirage; now, they must content themselves with the hearty promise of a virtual chicken. Gone, too, are the movies of old, which, impossibly vulgar and infantile as they were compared to the theater of the epoch, at least left their limited "mass audiences" where they found them—in the realm of the plausible; now, with audiences in the billions, their bedlam remakes have replaced the Bible as the cultural fodder of the world with special effects that can only be described as hallucinogenic. And gone are the newspapers of an era—cheap, plebeian, mass-circulation, scare-and-gossip mongering, yet, in their own way, bearers of some contrary authority, residual diversity, and polymorphous mischief; now, the populace is forcibly steered to the internet, where every fat housewife can, in her spare time, become her own newspaper reporter, journalist, and writer, as well as—if she really puts her mind to it—her own prophet, poet, and czar.

What I am saying here is not wholly new. A hundred years ago, such Russian writers as Ivan Shmelev, Konstantin Leontyev, Vasily Rozanov, and Pavel Florensky, to mention only a few, already foresaw that the coming of totalitarianism—masqueraded, as it remains to this day, in fine phrases about reason, justice, and liberty—would be a perfectly plausible culmination of the social and political trends long dominant in the West, rather than some indigenously Russian catastrophe. When, in November 1917, totalitarianism did come—establishing itself on the war-ravaged body of Russia like a parasite that had found a suitable host and subsequently spreading to Eastern, then Central, and, finally, Western Europe—it was only to be expected that the West would describe the contagion in terms that absolved its own culture from any responsibility.

Marxism is not what I mean, of course, because the specific responsibility of Marx and Engels for the Bolshevik coup of November 1917, if greater than zero, is certainly not greater than that of Luther and Gutenberg, Newton and Nobel, Darwin and Hegel. Marx was only a bit player in a game that had lasted for a thousand years before the publication of *Das Kapital*, all three volumes of which—in the Russian translation, in the 46th year of my life, in the sumptuous isolation of a Venetian palazzo—I finally found the time to read. It is an innocuous book, less inflammatory than a telephone directory, rather like something written by a weekend trainspotter during his bleak work week.

When the game in question began, whether it was actually invented by the Devil himself, and in what it consists are questions beyond the scope of this inquiry. But the outcome, for anybody with eyes, is plain to see. Simplification, rationalization, rectification of the immense God-given complexity that is life—life as our elders still remember it, life as it is described, for instance, in the Old and New Testaments, life with its hierarchies, its taboos, its fantasies, its prejudices, its luxuries, its unfairnesses, and its misfortunes—will inevitably thrust mankind into the totalitarian abyss from which, this time round, there will be no escaping.

No escaping, I say, because, even as the meanings of such life dwindle to inarticulate grunts of simple acquiescence, its means—the means at the disposal of its once and future totalitarian masters—will grow, multiply, and become totally invincible. For these are the same means that have been burgeoning in the West for the past thousand years, nurtured throughout by the selfsame *ratio* that has been depleting and enfeebling Western culture by demystifying and streamlining it. Once upon a time, these means served a purpose, making the West a citadel impregnable to its enemies. Alas, even this is no longer so. In the 21st century, great means without great meanings are the way of the world.

Those Russian writers foresaw the future more deftly than I foresee it here, of course, because the cultural difference between the world before and after 1917 is almost inconceivably deeper than any possible contrast between the world today and the world 15, 30, or 100 years from now. All the elements of global totalitarianism are already in evidence, and it is now only a matter of time before life as we still know it—from books, from movies, from *scatole musicali*—becomes a thing beyond the reach of individual memory. And then the salt itself will have lost its flavor, "good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men," though why that should happen is left unexplained by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount.

Writers like Shmelev, who survived the Red occupation of the Crimea, can explain why. The flavor, you see, all goes into the tears. c

Those Druids Had Mooids

by Sally Cook

The Holbeins, and Turner and all of the rest
Of the painters we love—they're the brightest and best
Then I view deconstruction, and bodily fluids
Wiped onto the canvas, and wish for the druids
For at least they had ritual reasons for gore
When they painted themselves blue, I note furthermore
They were always dramatic, and never a bore!

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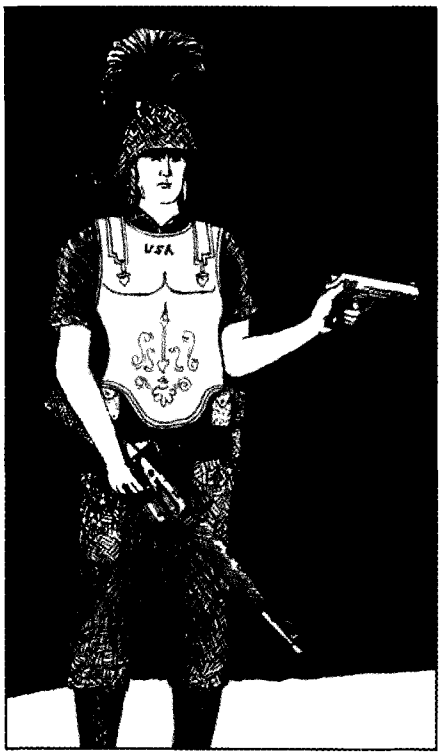
Who's the Ugliest of Them All?

by H.A. Scott Trask

"Empires are not built in fits of absent-mindedness."

—Charles A. Beard

American Empire
by Andrew Bacevich
Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press; 295 pp., $29.95



D. Ward Sterett

Described by the author as a "venture in contemporary history," *American Empire* is also an in-depth study of the post-Cold War foreign policies of the last three presidential administrations, all of which Andrew Bacevich believes sought to preserve and extend an American empire. Bacevich, a professor of international relations at Boston University, has written an insightful book, full of revealing quotations and wholly devoid of caut and naiveté. He has no patience with those who deny the reality of empire. "Like it or not," he observes, "America today *is* Rome."

> Holding sway in not one but several regions of pivotal geopolitical importance, disdaining the legitimacy of political economic principles other than its own, declaring the existing order to be sacrosanct, asserting unquestioned military supremacy with a globally deployed force configured not for self-defense but for coercion: these are the actions of a nation engaged in the governance of empire.

H.A. Scott Trask has a Ph.D. in American history, is finishing a political study of antebellum political economist Condy Raguet of Philadelphia, and is writing a book on the Northern antiwar movement during the War Between the States.

Bacevich recognizes five components of American imperialism. First, its leaders believe that the United States represents the model society of the future, to which all of mankind is destined to conform, as well as the essential instrument by which this transformation will be effected. America is the "indispensable nation," without whose leadership and military power the world would fall into disorder and fail to achieve its historical destiny. Vigorous American leadership in all spheres of human activity must remake the world's nations in the image of the United States—democratic, capitalist, multiethnic, and culturally diverse—and thus bring about the consummation of history, which they envision as a global civilization without national boundaries or ethnic distinctions, in which war, poverty, fear, terror, and evil itself have ceased to exist. The contradiction between the assumed inevitability of this historical process and the perceived indispensability of American leadership in achieving it, though unrecognized, is glaring.

Bacevich correctly discerns both the Marxist-Leninist and the Wilsonian contributions to the thinking of the American foreign-policy elite. Its beliefs that history has an inevitable utopian destination, that one government and its military constitute history's vanguard, and that our government must and should promote world revolution derive from Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky, respectively. George W. Bush's political messianism is the essence of Wilsonianism. Perhaps more than any other president since Woodrow Wilson, Bush sees himself as God's instrument for world redemption.

Bacevich is no theologian, and so he fails to emphasize the heresy and danger in these pseudo-Christian religious conceits. The notions that any nation is "indispensable"; that certain political leaders have a divine mission; that God's kingdom is of *this* world; and that war, poverty, and evil can be extirpated from the earth all directly contradict the Word of God. These heresies, nevertheless, are part of the worldview of the two Bushes and, to a lesser extent, of Bill Clinton, all three of whom regard opposition to America's world-historical mission as evil. For instance, speaking in Honolulu on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, George H.W. Bush charged that "isolationism flew escort for the very bombers that attacked our men 50 years ago"—thus establishing moral equivalency between American isolationism and Japanese militarism. (Given Franklin D. Roosevelt's policy of provocation and his foreknowledge of the Japanese carrier strike, Bush's statement is as mendacious as it is sickening.) George W. Bush's doctrine—

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"either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists"—renders discussion, dissent, and even neutrality treasonous.

The second component of American post-Cold War strategy is the promotion of "openness," defined by Bacevich as "the removal of barriers to the movement of goods, capital, people, and ideas." Of course, it is this very "openness" (specifically with regard to borders) that made September 11 possible and thus "facilitated an act of mass murder on American soil." Although they rarely acknowledge it, the elites recognize that a liberal immigration policy renders the country more vulnerable to terrorist attack as well as to drug smuggling and internationally organized crime. They have, however, no intention of making the country safer by curbing Islamic immigration or deporting dangerous aliens—even those who are here illegally or who hail from countries known to be prime recruiting grounds for terrorists. Bacevich does not explain why the people responsible for the nation's security refuse to abandon such an obviously suicidal policy. Unwilling to prevent terrorists, potential terrorists, and terrorist supporters from entering the country, the elites have chosen instead to attempt to eliminate terrorism and evil from the entire planet. In the meantime, Americans will surely suffer the steady erosion of their few remaining freedoms. Bacevich does not make this point as forcefully as he should: The logic of open borders ends in a universal empire abroad and a police state at home.

The third component of American strategy is an insistence upon American "global leadership," which Bacevich regards as a euphemism for imperial dominance of the world's most important regions: North America, Europe, the Middle East, East Asia, and South America. According to the Wolfowitz doctrine—enunciated first in 1992 and serving as unofficial American foreign policy since then—the United States will not tolerate the emergence even of a regional power that aspires to leadership and challenges American domination in any of these five regions. (Bacevich terms Wolfowitz's document "a blueprint for permanent American global hegemony.")

The fourth component is the maintenance of worldwide American military supremacy, defined as the capability of defeating any possible combination of hostile powers that might join forces to overthrow American hegemony. In 1998, three years *before* September 11, the U.S. military budget was $266 billion—only three billion dollars short of the combined military budgets of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Israel, Japan, Russia, and China. In 2000, the U.S. Marine Corps alone (169,300 troops) was larger than the entire British (115,000), the Italian (153,000), or the French army (169,300). Today, total military spending approaches $400 billion.

The fifth and last component of American global strategy is what Bacevich describes as "the militarization of US foreign policy," or the deliberate use of military force as an instrument of policy. Rather than welcoming the collapse of the Soviet Union as an opportunity to reduce the size of the military and bring troops home, the Bush and Clinton administrations used it to employ force without fear of precipitating World War III. Similarly, September 11 created a national psychology receptive to higher military spending and more force deployments abroad. Bacevich argues that the United States promotes democracy, human rights, and self-determination only when it is expedient to do so—that is, when it serves the concrete economic, political, or military interests of the American empire. Idealistic or humanitarian language serves merely to provide moral and ideological cover, as it has done since the Spanish-American War in 1898.

Bacevich's observations on the state of American culture and nationality read as if they were excerpted from back issues of *Chronicles*. Bacevich questions whether the United States remains a nation in any meaningful sense, having become a "society in which citizens were joined to one another by little except a fetish for shopping, professional sports, and celebrities, along with a ravenous appetite for pop culture." He does suggest, however, that, despite public celebrations of diversity as a source of strength, the elites are beginning to recognize ever-expanding ethnic and cultural pluralism as a growing problem and to realize that, in the absence of those ties that once held the country together, maintaining "prosperity" has become "a precondition for preserving domestic harmony." Specifically, he cites a 1999 U.S.-government study that warns that "multicultural fragmentation," "shifts in generational attitudes," and "the decline in overt manifestations of national identification" are "undermining American identity and national will." That there is some awareness of the situation at the higher levels of government explains why, despite the apocalyptic rhetoric of the current administration and its insistence that we are in a war that will decide the fate of "civilization," President Bush has refrained from imposing war taxes or calling for a draft. "Political rhetoric," Bacevich writes,

> might still swell with stirring Wilsonian allusions to democracy, peace, and freedom, but these amounted to little more than window dressing. They were not words entailing any obligation to act.

To have summoned Americans to sacrifice would have interfered with the "closest thing to a national purpose"—the hurried quest for "ever more material comforts and pleasures, with ever fewer restraints on the sovereign self." In other words, Bush's advisors believe that Americans will support the "war on terror" only so long as they do not have to pay or fight for it.

Bacevich notes an important paradox. On the one hand, pride in U.S. military power has become "a central element in what little remained of an American national identity." Although he might have pointed to *Saving Private Ryan*, *Band of Brothers*, *Pearl Harbor*, *JAG*, and the endless World War II documentaries on the History Channel, he instead cites polls revealing that, even *before* September 11, Americans wanted *no* reductions in military spending. The percentage of Americans who believed that the United States spent *too much* on the military declined steadily from 50 percent in 1990 to 20 percent in 2000, while the percentage of

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those who believed we spent *too little* grew steadily, from nine percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 2000. By 2000, there was no public support whatever for scaling back America's worldwide military deployments.

Yet Americans revealed no disposition to join the fighting in the mountains of Afghanistan or to storm the ramparts of Baghdad. The number of Armed Forces recruits did not increase after September 11. The public reaction to the debacle in Mogadishu in 1993, in which 18 elite Army Rangers were killed and 78 were wounded, demonstrated that Americans would not tolerate significant casualties in the brush wars of empire. The Clinton administration took note and thenceforth relied exclusively on "gunboats" (cruise missiles, high-altitude bombing) and "gurkhas" (native soldiers trained and equipped by American advisors) to wage its wars. An expanding population has allowed Washington to maintain global military supremacy without resorting to a draft. Bacevich notes that, in 2000, the proportion of Americans on active duty (fewer than one in 200) was *less* than it had been in 1940.

In the year after September 11, Americans revealed

> a curious patriotism—doubtless heartfelt, but arguably wider than it was deep. As the United States embarked upon its global war against terror, political leaders carefully refrained from demanding much of individual Americans. Apart from expressions of national unity . . . not very much was offered . . . The primary responsibility of the average citizen for the duration of the emergency remained what it had been in more peaceful times: to be an engine of consumption. The Bush administration called on Americans to get out and spend, energetically, for the sake of the nation's economic well-being. "Get on board," urged the president. "Fly and enjoy America's great destination spots. Get down to Disney World in Florida. Take your families and enjoy life."

Fight the terrorists by going on vacation? Given the apocalyptic rhetoric of the Bush administration with regard to the seriousness of this "war," such an appeal is preposterous. It does offer evidence, however, for Bacevich's suspicion that the elite suspects the chief vulnerability of the empire to be internal divisions in a "nation" of self-seeking individuals and special-interest groups.

Bacevich acknowledges that American global belligerency and hegemonic dictation are generating resentment, resistance, and reprisals all over the world. He outlines four opponents—among them, the particularist who "persist[s] in believing that identity is sacred, indelible, and rooted in place, that ownership of a particular plot of land remains as in ancient times a cause worth fighting and even dying for." While he has in mind the Palestinians, Bacevich's description applies to French and Austrian patriots, as well as to old-stock Americans who resent the invasion of their homeland. Ominously, Bacevich writes,

> To cope with this resistance—expressed either as instability or as a refusal to abide by the norms governing an open world—American policymakers, even as they proclaim their peaceful intentions, will resort to force.

He does not, however, expect the American people—most of whom do not seem even to be aware of the United States' global military presence—to seek to restrain their rulers. While the severity and frequency of terrorist reprisals on American targets have increased in recent years, there is no indication that Americans have the slightest understanding of the cause-and-effect relationship involved. Rather, they seem to have accepted at face value President Bush's oft-repeated canard that we were attacked because we are "free." The myth of American innocence remains a cherished tenet of the American civil religion.

Bacevich ignores the more sinister aspects of the U.S. global strategy. For instance, he accepts without question that the 1999 U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade was accidental and that a Serb mortar was responsible for the 1995 Sarajevo marketplace massacre that provided a pretext for U.S. and NATO forces to begin bombing the Bosnian Serbs. (The explosion was actually generated by ground explosives set by Bosnian Muslims, who were assisted by the CIA.) He also neglects to point out that U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War has been pro-Islamic everywhere in the world, except in the West Bank. Washington has maintained close ties to the anti-Christian regime in Saudi Arabia; has threatened Austria when that country voted for the Freedom Party; has twice intervened to bring about Muslim military victories in the Balkans; has supported the establishment of an Islamic state in Kosovo; and is now pressuring Europe to admit Turkey to the European Union. Though Andrew Bacevich does not reach this conclusion, the most dangerous anti-Western power in the world may be the United States of America. c

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While America Sleeps

by Joe Scotchie

America Extinguished: Mass Immigration and the Disintegration of American Culture
by Samuel T. Francis
Monterey, VA: Americans for Immigration Control; 215 pp., $6.95

◆

Ten years ago, it appeared that immigration restrictionists were poised to win some real political victories. In 1992, Pat Buchanan had raised the previously untouchable issue in his presidential primary challenge to George H.W. Bush. That same year, *National Review*, under the editorship of John O'Sullivan, joined *Chronicles* in calling for deep cuts in legal immigration. Two years later, California voters ignored their media betters and voted overwhelmingly for Proposition 187, the ballot initiative that would deny certain welfare benefits to illegal aliens. Bills restricting immigration had the support of numerous members of Congress.

By the summer of 1996, all of that momentum had collapsed. After Buchanan shocked the political world by winning the New Hampshire primary, he was savaged by the media with a tidal wave of hate-filled rhetoric unseen before in American history. Congress's attempts to make mild cuts in legal immigration were defeated when 77 Republicans voted with open-borders Democrats. In time, O'Sullivan would be fired from *National Review*, and the author of this collection would lose his regular column at the *Washington Times*. Finally, in 1999, federal courts ruled Proposition 187 "unconstitutional," a decision unopposed by California's governing class.

Samuel Francis's collection of columns on immigration reflects this gloomy situation. His 1997 essay collection, *Revolution From the Middle*, allowed for some optimism that a Middle American populist movement might succeed. That volume had a blue cover with a flickering light at the center. The artwork for *America Extinguished*, on the other hand, shows a lighted American-flag candle in the process of steady meltdown.

Francis has not been the only writer to confront the immigration issue. However, no other columnist has written so relentlessly or so courageously on the subject. The 59 columns collected here attack mass immigration on economic, political, and cultural grounds. Large-scale immigration floods the labor pool, driving down wages. Pro-immigration conservatives, usually in the employ of big business, complain about a labor shortage, especially in the area of high-tech jobs. In fact, no such shortage exists. Less immigration would mean higher wages for American workers. In addition, had massive immigration been halted three decades ago, there would be nine million fewer poor people in the United States today.

Where politics is concerned, immigration has helped to create the now-infamous red/blue American divide. The red zone is the traditional America ranging from West Virginia to Nevada, a nation far more conservative than the first-generation Texan it elected in 2000. Much of the blue zone (the East Coast and the West Coast, as well as urban centers in the Midwest) has long been liberal; nowadays, it is, among other things, as much hispanophone as anglophone and seethes with resentment of the heritage of 18th- and 19th-century America. The Republicans' incessant pandering to the Hispanic vote, detailed by Francis, has only moved the GOP further to the left, allowing the party to accept the leftist *status quo* on immigration, affirmative action, and funding for bilingual education. And yet the Hispanic vote remains solidly Democratic. Meanwhile, benighted white males continue to form the base of the Republican electorate. For now, they have no place to go.

The most striking examples of how immigration and changing demographics have upended the Old America are apparent in the culture wars. California legislators consider an official holiday for *Cinco de Mayo* and another for the 1960's radical Cesar Chavez. Meanwhile, events and symbols of Western civilization, most notably the Columbus Day parade and the Confederate Battle Flag, remain under attack from multiculturalist fanatics.

The rise of anti-Western ideologies is the cause of the restrictionists' greatest frustration. Most Americans care nothing for the nostrums of multiculturalism; at the same time, they care little about preserving the Western culture that gave birth to our liberties. For the vast majority, it seems, "American culture" does not signify the political philosophy of Patrick Henry, the collected works of Mark Twain, or a national holiday for George Washington. Rather, it means whatever junk the television and film industry in Hollywood and Manhattan churns out.

Such complacency is not the restrictionists' only dilemma. In the 1980's, an immigration crisis existed, but it was confined mostly to urban areas. This is no longer the case. Now, once-pleasant small towns such as Dalton, Georgia, and Rogers, Arkansas, find themselves overwhelmed by illegals serving the cheap labor "needs" of American industrialists. Not to be outdone, the governor of Iowa, Tom Vilsack, recently concocted a plan that would bring no fewer than 310,000 Third World immigrants to that tranquil Midwestern state. The state's "business and civic" leaders endorsed the plan, but a solid majority of Iowans strongly opposed it.

Does public opinion count for anything? Not even the events of September 11, 2001, could break through the immigration impasse. Why? "Mass immigration is a deliberate, politically created policy, deeply rooted in the material interests of the ruling elites of the United States," writes Francis.

> It serves to depress wages and lower labor costs for large corporations; it serves to replenish a dwindling number of members in labor unions; it offers entire new constituencies and voting blocs to the two established political parties; it provides a new underclass for which an immense welfare bureaucracy can deliver services and social therapy; and it promises a new "multicultural" society in which cultural elites, already deeply alienated from traditional American institutions, and vast new cultural and political ethnic lobbies can gain power. When a policy is as closely entwined with material interests . . . as immigration now is, it tends to become impervious to ideas and arguments, and it will take more than the terrorism of Sept. 11 . . . to change it.

Francis's intention is not to drive the reader to despair but to action. Late as it is, grassroots political action can persuade the power elites to enact long-overdue policies. If even a small fraction of Americans were dues-paying members of

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the various anti-immigration lobbies currently at work in Washington, then such groups could have real clout. At present, the only grassroots action taking place is by Arizona ranchers. Fed up with the government's refusal to patrol the border, they have armed themselves in order to defend their property from what is, literally, a foreign invasion. (The elites in Washington believe that the ranchers are the ones who are out of line.)

Still, it is likely that, grassroots activism or not, the Republican Party will once again be forced to address the immigration issue. If immigration continues at current rates, blue America will soon gain the political upper hand. And as already has happened in numerous small towns in red country, a blue culture will make great inroads into Middle America. Whether the GOP will do the right thing—and whether it will do so before it is too late—remains an open and very troubling question.

Joe Scotchie is the author, most recently, of Revolt from the Heartland: The Search for an Authentic Conservatism *(Transaction) and* Street Corner Conservative: Patrick J. Buchanan and His Times *(Alexander Books).*

Light Slander, Heavy Artillery

by Paul Gottfried

Slander: Liberal Lies About the American Right
by Ann Coulter
New York: Crown Publishers; 256 pp., $25.95

Why the Left Hates America
by Daniel J. Flynn
Roseville, California: Prima-Crown Publishers; 223 pp., $23.95

◆

Both of these books are written by young, self-styled conservatives; both demonstrate indisputably the unfounded charges made against the "right" by the media and academics; both easily devastate the biased and factually inaccurate statements about Republicans, conservatives, and the American past and present that emanate from the cultural left. The TV personalities Ann Coulter goes after, such as the simpering pinheads Katie Couric and Matt Lauer, treat Republican centrists as if they were closet members of the "extreme right." And the intellectual left's lies about the United States (which attribute to it a racist, sexist, and "homophobic" character) can be refuted—as, indeed, Flynn does—with minimal difficulty, as nearly all of them involve judging American life by angelic multicultural standards that no society outside of the contemporary Western world could hope to approach.

While understanding that what Coulter and Flynn deplore is widespread in all Western "democracies," I am left nevertheless to wonder why the cultural-political left behaves in the manner they describe, since—from where I stand—it has already won its wars. If John Gray and John O'Sullivan are correct, the United States represents the "utopia of the left," the instantiation of political correctness and the social reconstruction by state managers for which every post-Marxist leftist yearns. The Republican Party feverishly pursues Democratic constituencies: Having given us the 1964 Civil Rights Act and affirmative action, it is now trying to outdo the Democrats by advocating bilingualism and Hispanic immigration. Why do misnamed liberals bother to attack these wussies at all? I am not denying that what Coulter and Flynn tell us about biased reporting is true: I am merely perplexed as to why the "slanders" and "lies" they address are issued in the first place.

A possible answer is suggested by Coulter's recurrent complaint—starting with the first sentence of her book—that "political 'debate' in this country is insufferable." The insufferability, of course, is deliberate: Intemperate assaults are a tactic by which the established left and the neoconservatives keep conservative opinion from being heard and considered. Although certifiable lightweights can be found in this crowd, most of the media left see verbal intimidation as useful for advancing their agenda—and preventing American politics from veering rightward. The media find it useful as well to have me-too Republicans occasionally alternating with liberal Democrats, and they incessantly slobber over George Will and Bill Kristol; nevertheless, they understand the need to keep things under control by treating Rush Limbaugh as a far-right personality—as if to indicate that anyone to the right of this Republican shill will feel the full brunt of their anger. Thus the "slander" and the "hate America" language that Coulter and Flynn attack are guardrails set up to restrict political discourse and political policy to the left side of the field.

A year ago last September (obviously before December 2002's Lottgate), David Broder labeled Jesse Helms—who had just announced his impending retirement—"the last racist senator." The evidence Broder adduced for his accusation is that Helms had voted against Martin Luther King, Jr., Day as a national holiday and had made an issue in his 1983 senatorial race of the fact that his black liberal opponent had grown rich on racial set-asides. Broder, who is now in his 70's, must remember that many congressmen, as well as President Reagan, expressed strong reservations about the King holiday for nonracial reasons (e.g., King's less than honorable past). Moreover, challenging the merits of affirmative action, or criticizing the material advantages that one's opponent obtained from this arrangement, is not the equivalent of teaching or practicing a doctrine of racial inequality. What Broder was really saying is that those who control the communications business will not tolerate those who move right—even as far to the right as where a Humphrey Democrat once stood. His real message was, *Republicans had better accept the changes we have brought about, or we'll bring out the heavy artillery, the way we did against Helms and Buchanan.*

Convincing as their illustrations of leftist splenetics are, both Flynn and Coulter slip at times into the rigidity of movement conservatism. Flynn's concluding chapter, "America's True Legacy," reads like a spin-off from a Dinesh D'Souza lecture series at the Heritage Foundation, while Coulter feels obliged to compliment neoconservatives who have been coddled by the media empire. Should conservatives take grave offense that the media refuse to treat Bill Bennett as a serious scholar or that they have taken notice of the repetitiveness of his anthologies (the sales of which are as inexplicable to me as they are to the *New York Times*)?

Coulter devotes several paragraphs to complaining about the insufficient regard that the publishing world has accorded Dinesh D'Souza, who received an advance of $150,000 on his last book, compared with the $600,000 payment made to feminist author Naomi Wolf for hers. She never mentions that authentic

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conservatives of an earlier period frequently died in apostolic poverty.

Paul Gottfried, a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, is the author, most recently, of Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt *(University of Missouri Press).*

Two Skeptics

by John C. Chalberg

The Skeptic: A Life of H.L. Mencken
by Terry Teachout
New York: HarperCollins;
432 pp., $29.95

◆

H.L. Mencken has been given a fairly free ride by his various biographers. That ride is now officially over. It might have ended even sooner, had Terry Teachout been able to make up his mind about his subject. For years, Teachout has advertised himself as being "at work" on a biography of Mencken. Now, the reason for the extended birthing process has become painfully clear: Mr. Teachout apparently had trouble deciding what to do with, or to, Mr. Mencken. Alternately attracted to and repelled by his subject, Teachout opted in the end for an exercise in skepticism as a means of reducing his quarry to the ambiguous status of skeptic.

The proof, for starters, seems apparent from the pictures. Having sifted through the visual evidence, Teachout tells us that Mencken's photographers often captured a man with a puzzled look on his face. For Teachout, that expression was less a pose than an inadvertent self-revelation. Editorial writers are said to be often wrong but never in doubt. Not so the editor of the *American Mercury*, concludes Teachout, who is certain that the editorial certainty of the Sage of Baltimore was also much more pose than reality. "I doubt even my doubts," Mencken remarked on occasion. Surely, however, to doubt one's doubts is to take refuge in a kind of certitude.

Mencken, of course, was a skeptic, especially on the subject of theology. Even here, however, he could not resist playing, at least, with the alternative. Should he ever land in Heaven and there be confronted with his unbelief, Mencken wrote, he would simply look the assembled in the eye and say: "Gentlemen, I was wrong." At *that* point, would Mencken have ceased finally to be a skeptic? Probably not.

First and last, Henry Mencken was a cynic. When asked why he continued to live in America, the professional curmudgeon replied, "Why do men go to zoos?" Teachout cannot resist quoting that line. What biographer could? This biographer finds the retort "both funny and memorable" but not "in the end quite good enough." Why not? Because it points to a "fundamental inadequacy in Mencken's thought," namely, a "skepticism so extreme as to issue in philosophical incoherence." Why not a "*cynicism* so extreme"?

Teachout compares Mencken unfavorably to Samuel Johnson. Like the redoubtable Dr. Johnson, the formidable Mr. Mencken was "resolutely unsentimental and ebulliently grim," not to mention driven by an "unswerving commitment to common sense." While Johnson held out for the "stability of truth," however, Mencken found nothing that was "wholly good, wholly desirable, wholly true."

Actually, Mencken did believe, like the ancient Cynics, in virtue and self-control, in independence and self-interest. As he liked to put it: "I believe in being free, acquiring knowledge, and telling the truth." Whether ultimate truth existed was something else again.

Having invested all these years in H.L. Mencken, the semiskeptical Teachout finds much to doubt about his subject. He would have us believe that all that remains of Mencken is a cramped sense of "honor," a concept as "shallow as the Victorian idea of progress in which he believed so firmly (and so paradoxically)." By his own account, Mencken's "moral code" could be reduced to a single command: "Keep your engagements." Teachout is not impressed: "No more revealing thing has ever been said about H.L. Mencken." If Mencken could have read that line, he might have added that it reveals a good deal also about his biographer: namely, a resolutely unsentimental determination to deny that there was a Menckenian *there* there. Here, at any rate, Teachout is surely both wrong about Mencken and forgetful of Mencken's era. Things may have begun to come apart in the 1920's, but his was still a time when the rest of the moral code was pervasive enough to be taken for granted (even by Mencken) and strong enough to withstand even its harshest critics (especially Mencken).

Teachout is bent on demonstrating where and why Mencken was supremely wrong about himself. While Mencken bemoaned that he was a man without a country, Teachout finds him to have been thoroughly American in spite of himself and declares his writing a "matchlessly exact expression of the American temper." While Mencken took pride in being a clearheaded thinker, Teachout judges his philosophy of nihilistic conservatism to be *essentially* incoherent. Mencken invariably placed himself above the fray, forever the *poseur*, eternally disengaged. Behind the pose, Teachout finds an engaged man—even, at times, an angry man. Mencken regretted having been born at the wrong time; Teachout has determined that the 20's and Mencken were a perfect match, given Mencken's unique brand of social and economic libertarianism. Mencken denied that he was either an idealist or a man of religious faith; Teachout detects Mencken fervently worshiping at the secular altar of scientific progress.

So far, much of Teachout's analysis is on the money; he is not quite finished, however. Mencken was unashamedly antidemocratic and antifeminist, anti-"booboisie" and anti-New Deal, anti-Hollywood and anti-Bible Belt, among so many other antis derived from his poses, prides, and prejudices. Teachout eliminates none of the above, but adds one of the two ultimate antis of our day—namely, antisemitic—but not necessarily anti-Catholic, even though Mencken did not like "religious Catholics" any more than he liked "religious Protestants" or "religious Jews" and was hostile to, not to mention skeptical of, anyone who claimed to be both a man of intelligence and a man of faith.

On this last score, Teachout squirms and equivocates, hems and haws, but ultimately does for H.L. Mencken what was once done for two men of intelligence and faith, G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. Teachout's final verdict: "It is not [Mencken's] anti-Semitism for which he will be remembered—but that he was an anti-Semite cannot now be reasonably denied." For his part, Mencken did not think that he could "rationally" be called antisemitic. Teachout, however, claims to know better. After all, Mencken thought of the Jews as a people apart (as in the

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"sharp, unyielding separateness of the Jews"); therefore, he must have been an antisemite. Moreover, Mencken could be downright nasty in his comments about Jews (and everybody else); therefore, he must have been an antisemite.

Not content with declaring Mencken to have been wrong about Mencken, Teachout thinks that Mencken's admirers have been wrong about him as well—during the 1920's especially, when his *American Mercury* was obligatory reading among the educated elite. That elite read Mencken on the Scopes trial and assumed he was one of them. They observed Mencken at war against puritans and prohibitionists and leaped to the erroneous conclusion that he was as liberal and as cosmopolitan as they were. In what passed for the culture wars of the 20's, those who warred against the "yokels" (to borrow from Mencken) presumed to know instinctively that the Sage of Baltimore was on their side.

But did they know Mencken? The public man may have been the scourge of Middle America, whether rural or urban, but the private Mencken was very much the Victorian traditionalist. In sum, the writer who excoriated the "booboisie" was a member in good standing of the very class of stick-in-the-mud Americans that he so gleefully skewered. He was also a gentleman who paid his bills on time, took his family responsibilities seriously, maintained lifelong friendships (Teachout's effort to paint him as a serial discarder of those who were no longer useful to him notwithstanding), and was not a nuisance to his neighbors.

On this score, Mencken knew himself very well. Unlike today's educated elite, Mencken was never in search of anything so ordinary as a sense of place, or anything so laughable as a sense of purpose, or anything so ephemeral as ultimate truth. The first was automatically his by birthright, conveyed by the glories of daily life in the streets of Baltimore. The second was not worth the chase (beyond his disciplined efforts behind his writer's desk). And the third, for Mencken, did not exist.

Teachout is rightly troubled by Mencken's worldliness. An agnostic (atheists were simply too arrogant for this arrogant man), Mencken reserved his most searing commentaries for men of belief, especially William Jennings Bryan. To the Sage of Baltimore, the Boy Orator of the Plains was purely and simply a "dolt." To Terry Teachout, this "dolt" saw something that Mencken could not: that Darwinism was less an expression of immutable truth than an exercise in pernicious ideology. Here, Teachout scores his most telling point. Bryan may have been a country bumpkin, but he was also a man of childlike faith. Mencken may have been a brilliant writer, but he was also a man of childlike faith—and a dangerously misguided one, at that.

There was a time when Mencken was threatened with extinction, a time even before his death when it appeared that he no longer mattered and no longer deserved to be read. During the 30's, Mencken was so bedeviled by "Roosevelt II" and his infernal New Deal and so unbedeviled by Hitler ("he looked at evil and saw only ignorance") that he found himself, at best, a thoroughly despised individual and, at worst, a completely ignored writer. That, however, did not last. No man with Mencken's talent could be kept down for long, much less forever. As World War II engulfed his suddenly ancient world, a sexagenarian Mencken resurrected himself with three delightful volumes of memoirs, and he has remained among the living ever since. True, there was a moment in the late 80's when the posthumous publication of his private diaries "revealed" that he was a racist, a misogynist, and an antisemite, after all. Worse still, he stood exposed as a snarlingly insensitive, hopelessly hypochondriacal, damnably penny-pinching clod to boot.

No genuine clod, however, could ever hope to match his inimitable style. And none ever has. Will Teachout's biography provide one more occasion for temporarily burying Mencken? Teachout, no doubt, hopes not, but his final ambiguous judgment is not designed to convert potential Mencken readers into actual Mencken disciples. For him, H.L. Mencken was "something less than a truly wise man" and "something more than a memorable stylist."

In sum, Terry Teachout's biography evokes Mencken's own estimate of a freshly adjourned session of the Maryland legislature: "It could have been worse." For Mencken, that was high praise. Indeed, it happened also to be the highest praise he could bestow on a dead cat.

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Making the Man

by Clark Stooksbury

Uniforms: Why We Are What We Wear
by Paul Fussell
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.; 204 pp., $22.00

"There is something about a man in uniform," the old adage goes. Few have been as affected by their time in uniform as Paul Fussell, who served in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1947, during which period (he tells us in his memoir) he was "ill-treated by members of the German Wehrmacht." The titles of some of his books—*Doing Battle*, *Wartime*, *Thank God for the Atom Bomb*—indicate that the author's experience in World War II greatly affected his worldview; and so *Uniforms* represents a natural progression from Fussell's generalized interest in war and the military.

Fussell, indeed, devotes most of his attention to different military styles. Uniforms serve a variety of functions in the Armed Services. Most importantly, they clarify, in combat, who is friend or foe. They also serve to suppress individuality and generate *esprit de corps*. Fussell examines these uses from many different angles and from the perspectives of different countries, mostly with examples drawn from the 1940's.

Nazi Germany was, naturally, uniform crazy. The Nazis wanted everyone to dress alike so that everyone would think alike.

> A key impulse in the social operations of the Third Reich was to urge uniformity, regarded as the ideal cultural condition. As Joseph Goebbels once said, the object of the cultural departments of the Reich—literary, musical, cinematic—was "to unite all creative persons in a cultural uniformity of the mind."

As Fussell describes it, almost everyone from Adolf Hitler down to the *Bund Deutsche Mädel* (a compulsory girls' organization) was uniformed: Even coal miners emerged from underground with a martial look. "An apprentice miner wore a black high-collared tunic with rows of sil-

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ver buttons on sleeves and chest, twenty-four buttons in all, and, on top, a quasi-military visor cap."

The uniforms of the German miners were more ostentatious, even, than those of Gen. George Patton, who earns Fussell's contempt. Patton (whom Fussell on one occasion refers to as "Georgie") took advantage of regulations allowing generals to design their own uniforms by attaching flashy gilt buttons to his Eisenhower jacket (a waist-length coat) and wore a "preposterous lacquered helmet liner, apparently betokening, in his view, his readiness to kill at all times and places." There was, however, a method to this sartorial madness in the mind of the general, who once wrote that "officers must assert themselves by example and by voice. They must be pre-eminent in courage, deportment and dress." He also told his diary in 1943 that "I have to exude confidence I don't feel every minute." Hence his gaudy uniform, set off by the cowboyish pearl-handled six-shooter on his hip.

General Eisenhower did not go around sporting shiny buttons or wearing a helmet, looking as if he were about to go into combat at any moment. Fussell praises Ike's humility, contrasting it with Patton's "boyish vainglory." "Because he was seldom physically in command of troops, [Eisenhower] refused to enjoy the easy claim to courage implied by such devices as Patton's helmet liner and visible pistol." His humility influenced his counterpart in the Pacific, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who, according to Fussell, had previously been a "peacock."

The most peacockesque branch of the U.S. military is, of course, the Marine Corps. Fussell rhapsodically praises the full-dress Marine uniform and asks,

> how can army green compete with marine light and dark blue, red stripes down trouser legs, shiny white visor caps, dress capes lined in red silk, with white gloves, white belts, goldish buttons on dress jacket cuffs, and, for ceremonial purposes, sabers even for sergeants?

The Marine Corps look maintains remarkable fealty to tradition, the "blood stripe" (reserved for the rank of corporal and above) representing the extreme casualties suffered by officers and NCOs at the battle of Chapultepec during the Mexican War. (Fussell does mention some Marine Corps regulations that are not so traditional, such as the one specifying that, "if worn, wigs will comply with grooming regulations" and another stating that "maternity uniforms will be worn by pregnant Marines when the local commander determines that the standard uniforms can no longer be worn.")

Soldiers are not the only people who wear military uniforms, and so Fussell considers the case of pretend warriors, or "reenactors." He suggests, however, the term "weirdos" for grown men who, having

> never tasted the thrill of being machine-gunned and mortared and thus escaped . . . lifelong bodily and spiritual damage . . . get excited by faking it . . . and indulging fantasies of heroism, largely on weekends.

Fussell concedes that Civil War reenactors are "less openly psychiatric" than the World War II variety. The participants in the War Between the States are long dead, and the grisly suffering and death experienced at places such as Shiloh and Gettysburg are more abstract than the trauma and destruction resulting from the battles at the Ardennes and Okinawa, many of whose participants are not only alive but still writing books.

Fussell delves into dozens of other sartorial venues. He tells us why brides wear white (Queen Victoria started it), discusses the austere uniforms of the Amish, and examines the phenomenon of the United Parcel Service delivery man as a sex symbol, for which he has discovered an expert to offer an explanation:

> Dr. Jeffrey Sonnefeld, a professor of career studies at Emory University, observed that the UPS uniforms "are flattering. They fit nicely around the thigh and they aren't silly or trendy like those harsh blue pleats on the FedEx guys."

Finally, the notion that one should tread lightly in "meddling with the classics" occurs repeatedly here, as in Fussell's cautionary tale regarding Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, chief of naval operations in the early 1970's. Zumwalt, concerned about falling enlistments, decided that eliminating the traditional sailor's uniform depicted on the Cracker Jack box and replacing it with one that makes sailors look "more up-to-date and more like ordinary people" would help.

Imagine that. Admiral Zumwalt thought he could improve on the Cracker Jack box.

Clark Stooksbury writes from Knoxville, Tennessee.

RECEIVED WISDOM

Éléments is a French quarterly "*pour la civilization européenne*," edited by Robert de Herte from the neopagan perspective associated with Alain de Benoist (one of the journal's collaborators). The September 2002 number, "*L'Inde: la puissance et la fidelité*," contains several informative articles on India—concerning not only her current struggles but her ancient religion and culture as well. While many Christians in the West are prompt to lump all non-Christians together with Islam as enemies of the Faith, *Chronicles* religion editor Harold O.J. Brown has made the useful distinction between post-Christian religions that seem fabricated—as Islam was from the beginning—as enemies of Christendom and pre-Christian religions that contain wisdom and traditions worthy of serious study: Greco-Roman paganism, Taoism and Confucianism, Hinduism and its later offshoot, Buddhism. This issue of *éléments* makes a good beginning. The lead editorial, written by Robert de Herte, is a balanced (albeit neopagan) assessment of India's attempt to reestablish the nation, which is threatened by the Pakistani dictatorship, Islamic nationalism, Christian missionizing, and U.S. unilateralism, on the basis of patriotic Hinduism. The issue also contains articles on Sacha Guitry and Baroque music ("*Contre le jacobinisme musical*").

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by Samuel Francis

The Empire's New Clothes

Not the least of the several noticeable ironies that attend the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st is that, when the logically appropriate moment for the declaration of a formal American Empire arrived during the half-century of conflict with the Soviet Union, the empire failed to emerge. Today, well after any reasonable excuse we might have had for conquering the world has passed into the same graveyard as the Iron Curtain and the Un-American Activities Committee, the global imperium of the United States is virtually upon us. Liberals and neoconservatives who bleat tearfully over the spread of democracy and human rights across the planet invoke, at the same time, the need, the duty, and even the virtue of using the American military to clobber dissenters into submission. Interviewed in the *American Conservative* last fall, Norman Mailer mentioned that he had failed to understand the rationale behind the projected war on Iraq until he read an opinion column in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* that proclaimed the necessity of the United States conquering the world. Not long before, an issue of the *Atlantic* sported several articles suggesting that the United States occupy Iraq permanently and one (by Jimmy Carter's one-time aide James Fallows) proposing that we make Iraq the 51st state. Of course, the neocons agree (except when they are intimating that all Arab peoples should simply be exterminated), and hardly a week expires in which the *Weekly Standard*, *National Review*, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, or the *Washington Times* commentary section does not demand that the United States seize or obliterate one hapless country or another. *Empire*, once as nasty a term in the lexicon of the left as *free enterprise* and *security risk*, has suddenly become respectable again.

The rehabilitation of the imperial mission began well before the current unpleasantness in the Middle East; I first became aware of it while reviewing a book by the late Lewis Feuer titled *Imperialism and the Anti-Imperialist Mind* (1986). Professor Feuer, a sociologist and a respected professional scholar of Marx and Hegel, actually had good things to say about at least some kinds of imperialism well before it became fashionable to do so. In his book, he distinguishes between what he calls "regressive" and "progressive" imperialism. The latter is "founded on a cosmopolitan view of man, a conception of human worth to be found among all men," and leads "to what might we might characterize as a 'participatory imperialism'":

> A Spaniard, a Gaul, or Greek might, under the [progressive Roman] Empire, if he possessed the necessary talent, rise to the highest grades of the military or civil service, or even become Emperor. A progressive imperialism elevates living standards and cultural life; it brings education and the arts to its more backward areas. It establishes a universal rule of law and security of person.

Mr. Feuer's examples of "progressive imperialism" include the empires of Alexander the Great, the Romans, the British, the French (under Napoleon), and the Dutch, not to mention the current American Empire. "Regressive imperialism," on the other hand,

> is characterized by an animus against the rational culture of civilization. It is, as such, a form of rebellion, an anti-civilizational movement, an uprising energized by aggressive drives against cultural constraints. Genocidal behavior appears to be specifically characteristic of the imperialism of regressive societies, and has been so in our own time.

Examples include the imperialism of the German National Socialists, the Spaniards, the Mongols, and the Soviets. If it is not already apparent, Mr. Feuer makes perfectly clear in the third chapter of his book that the treatment of the Jewish people by a particular empire is a test of its kind of imperialism. Those that he lumps into the "progressive" type tended to be philosemitic (the Romans, at least at certain times, were marginal in this regard), while the "regressive" empires all treated Jews quite meanly—the Nazis, obviously so; the Spaniards, because they either expelled or insisted on converting or persecuting the Jews; and the Mongols, because they exterminated Jews and just about everyone else in their path.

What Professor Feuer accomplished in his book was to redecorate the cake of imperialism to make it palatable to the liberal left. So far from serving the interests and passions of Colonel Blimps, crusading missionaries, and vulgar jingoists, imperialism can be, in Feuer's view, an instrument of social and political progress. The "cosmopolitanism" it carries serves to subvert traditional institutions, identities, and values and to open the gates to "talent," even to the point of becoming emperor. Although he does not quite make the point explicitly, it is pretty clear that, in his view, what really determines which kind of imperialism develops is whether Jews are prominent in running it and gaining from it, and the prospect of countering antisemitism (as well as other forms of ethnic discrimination) is yet another feature of progressive imperialism that would make it more acceptable to liberalism.

Professor Feuer was generally correct in his characterization of imperialism, and his distinction is legitimate enough, though not always the most useful way to analyze it. We could also distinguish between "strategic" and "ideological" imperialism, for example. In the former, expansion comes about because of the need to defend your nation against an aggressive foreign competitor (Rome against Carthage or the United States against the Soviets, for example), while, in "ideological" imperialism, expansion and conquest result from the imperatives of an "armed doctrine" or a charismatic leader (Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan,

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Napoleon, seventh-century Islam, 18th-century Jacobinism, or 20th-century communism, for example). Moreover, it is clear that some such rationalization of contemporary post-Cold War American imperialism as that offered by Professor Feuer now prevails among American apologists for empire: The American Empire today, whatever its origins, is justified precisely because it claims to export the values of liberalism to all mankind and to destroy premodern societies and values.

Of course, the rationalization of any political system should never be taken at face value. Not only are there always anomalies between the way imperialism is defended by intellectuals disposed to do so and the way in which empires are actually obtained and ruled, but there are often ulterior reasons why imperialist intellectuals defend empire. Vergil's lines about "putting down the proud, the fettered slave to free" no doubt sounded terrific to the Romans who knew them, but to the hundreds of thousands of Gauls dragged off in chains to Mediterranean slave markets by the armies of Julius Caesar for the profit of the Roman ruling class, the poetry might have rung a bit hollow. Today, in the wake of American soldiers blasting Afghan, Iraqi, and Sudanese *fellaheen* to atoms, there march the transnational capitalist behemoths that will consolidate the "liberation" that empire brings with fast-food palaces, television that imports the piety of Pat Robertson along with the virtues of *Sex and the City*, and, eventually, modern highway and transportation systems that will level whatever remains of the non-Western civilizations of the East. As for slaves, there will be plenty to go round for everyone when the hordes of immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers descend on the empire's home shores.

It is precisely *this* consequence of imperialism—whatever its motives and whoever runs it and gains from it—that is the most important reason why serious conservatives should reject Professor Feuer's essentially neoconservative rationalization of empire. Imperialism *is* "cosmopolitan." It *does* dissolve the cultural integument of the societies and peoples it conquers, and it welcomes those peoples into the imperial ecumene and promotes them (or some of them) into the imperial ruling class, perhaps even into the imperial purple. That is exactly what those Romans who survived the imperial experience came to regret about the whole business, as evidenced in lines later than those of Vergil about the Orontes spilling its sewage into the Tiber. It was not the prevalence of the notion of a "career open to talents" or modern meritocracy that enabled such worthies as Septimius Severus, a North African, Philip the Arab, the son of a bandit chief, and similar adventurers to hoist themselves onto the throne but the disappearance of any criterion of legitimate authority except the skills of the *condotierre*, and it was clear to the surviving real Romans that the "liberation" that "progressive imperialism" brings carries a cost: the disintegration of the conquering culture and the empowerment of aliens. Historian Martin Nilsson noted that the son of Marcus Aurelius was the last Roman emperor of purely Italian stock and that the "Oriental [*i.e.*, Levantine] infiltration into the ruling classes of the Empire reached its height under Septimius Severus, coincidentally with the general victory of Oriental religious ideas." What Professor Feuer and his followers find to be "progress" is, to the actual builders of empire, nothing more than the extinction of their own culture by the aliens who profit from the arrangement.

That lesson ought to be obvious already to Americans, even before a full-scale formal empire is proclaimed and the perpetual wars that build it are begun. The most obvious price of modern European imperialism is the mass immigration now pouring into Europe, the United States, and Canada. In the case of Great Britain and France, the immigration they receive is the direct result of their empires; in the American case, it is the indirect result of our domination of the Western Hemisphere for the last century or more. It is mainly through the mass movements of populations—as slaves, armies, refugees, or immigrants—that the acid of imperialism erodes the very vessels that carry it.

As for the "talents" that empires suddenly release and allow to clamber up the social and political ladder, there is no doubt that this happens. Since the imperial acid eats away the cultural standards by which human achievements are evaluated, what else could possibly qualify the new leaders of the imperium but crude intelligence, cunning, brutality, and naked ambition? That some who display such traits might also eventually acquire civilized manners and beliefs is always a possibility, but there seems to be little indication that the later rulers of the Roman Empire (or of the British and American ones) did so to any considerable degree. If Dick Morris and Karl Rove had only a few of the virtues of Severus or Philip the Arab, the American empire might look forward to a brighter future than we can realistically expect.

Indeed, what today would constitute the American Empire has long since ceased to be recognizably American at all. The managerial class that presides over it glories in announcing that it no longer considers itself American, and, for all the flag-waving that the September 11 attacks stirred up, few really believe that a genuine national patriotism has been reclaimed. The terrorist attacks serve the ruling class well because they allow it to invoke patriotism and national security as an immediate justification for waging World War IV in order to conquer the world, but only those peasants who regard Lee Greenwood as a real country-music singer will be deluded by it. Indeed, if the American Empire is not really American, it is also not really an empire, progressive or regressive. An empire, after all, is the territory conquered by a political entity residing on a different territory. Because the managerial class has disengaged itself from any particular territory, and because its global power rests far less on the control of territory than on technical skills, knowledge, and the organizations it manages, its "empire" is virtually invisible and intangible.

Still, it cannot afford to allow gangs of primitives who take their religion seriously, believe in ethnic, sexual, and credal hierarchies, and reject modernity and technology to run around blowing up its office buildings and slaughtering thousands of its executive personnel—and, therefore, the imperialism of the managerial class is also a strategic one, intended simply to abolish, by either bloodshed or deracination, the cultural centers from which the threat to its power and existence emanate, just as much as the Roman senate intended to wipe the city-state of Carthage off the map, exterminate its people, and sow salt over the ground where the city lay. Whether it is ultimately progressive or regressive, American or transnational, the imperialism that is now emerging and that has suddenly become so fashionable shows every sign of enduring longer and conducting itself much more brutally than most of the imperial systems that have strutted across history's stage in the past ever did. c

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by Scott P. Richert

This Is Your Hometown

About two years ago, I wrote a "Letter From Rockford" entitled "A Month in the Life of the Industrial Midwest" (April 2001), in which I used excerpts from news reports to illustrate the rather dramatic economic changes that were taking place in the Rockford area—plant closings, layoffs, declining wages. At the time, I had no way of knowing, but the very month after the one that I had chosen to highlight—March 2001—has since been acknowledged by the federal government as the first month of the current recession, which may explain the number of phone calls, letters, and e-mails I received from readers across the country who said that, after reading the column, they had begun to notice similar news stories in their local media. The hard times, it seemed, were not confined to Rockford or even to the Rust Belt.

Now, two years, a midterm election, a bear market, and a September 11th later, there are precious few signs that it is morning again in America. In fact, looking at the overall state of the economy, the most remarkable thing, perhaps, is how much discretionary spending continues to go on. Very few chain restaurants have folded during this recession (locally owned restaurants, of course, are another story, but that's true in every economic climate), and the traffic continues to stream past my living-room window every Saturday and Sunday, as consumers (the only proper name for them) in their new, zero-percent-financed Japanese cars seek to fill the hole at the center of their existence with the latest piece of plastic forged from Middle Eastern oil by wage slaves in a Chinese factory.

The zero-percent financing provides the key to the puzzle, and the federal government has noted an incredible spike in household debt, as Americans have financed their continued consumption through credit cards, auto and home-equity loans, and advances on their 401(k)s. This cannot continue indefinitely, however: Some reports indicate that average household debt may have doubled since 2000 (average household credit-card debt alone reached $8,500 by mid-2002), and the rate of personal bankruptcy has risen to unprecedented heights. At some point, even dual-income families, who have to shop because they cannot afford not to, will have to curtail their spending. And then Rockford's East State Street corridor of chain restaurants and big-box stores will begin to resemble a supersized version of her struggling downtown.

Now Main Street's whitewashed
windows and vacant stores
Seems like there ain't nobody wants
to come down here no more . . .

Nowhere is the underlying softness in the economy more obvious than in the the small-business manufacturing sector. Several of the stories I highlighted in the earlier column concerned the closing of small factories, often the result of larger corporations (particularly in the auto industry) moving jobs to Mexico or China (and, increasingly, Eastern Europe). While the auto industry isn't necessarily setting out to replace the small factories' products with foreign-made parts (by, for instance, reversing the decades-long trend toward outsourcing when the Big Three move their factories overseas), NAFTA and GATT have still made it harder for small American manufacturers to compete. Tariffs may have been reduced or eliminated, but other costs—particularly transportation—have increased. The pressure then mounts on the small manufacturer to move his own operation south of the border or overseas, so that he can eliminate these additional costs or offset them through cheaper labor. If he refuses to do so, he may find, as one Rockford-area manufacturer recently did, that he has no option but to sell to someone who will.

They're closing down the textile mill
across the railroad tracks
Foreman says these jobs are going
boys and they ain't coming back
To your hometown . . .

Recently, I spent part of two days visiting the factories of Rockford Acromatic Products, a locally owned manufacturer of after-market auto parts. Founded by Dean Olson, Sr., in 1949, Rockford Acromatic (also known as Rockford Constant

Velocity) is now run by his sons, Dean (a longtime *Chronicles* supporter) and Jim Olson. The company has two factories, both "across the railroad tracks"—one on Beacon Street in Loves Park and the other on 11th Street in Rockford. The 11th Street plant also functions as a storage and shipping facility.

With the decline of the domestic steel industry over the last 20 years, Rockford Acromatic has become heavily dependent on foreign steel. Like (I suspect) many *Chronicles* readers, I initially cheered when President Bush announced that he was placing a tariff on certain steel imports. Now, after touring Rockford Acromatic and discussing the effects of the tariff with Dean Olson, I'm not so sure.

The problem is not that either tariffs or free trade are bad *per se* but that they always need to be viewed in historical context. Back during the battles over NAFTA and GATT of the early 1990's, when *Chronicles* was opposing such trade agreements because they had the potential to undermine national security and to gut the American economy, many libertarians joined forces with us, albeit for different reasons. As one prominent paleolibertarian never tired of saying, we don't need thousands of pages of regulations to declare that there will be free trade among the United States, Canada, and Mexico; all we need is the simple statement that "There will be free trade among the United States, Canada, and Mexico." That view, to put it charitably, is naive. "Free trade" is an abstract concept that has never existed in reality and never will. Once we recognize that condition, we can also understand that every businessman will try to structure trade in such a way that it will benefit him and his business. That's human nature. As Dean Olson says, "I don't know anyone who doesn't believe in free trade; it's just that it hasn't been

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applied equally." And it never will be.

Part of the problem with this current tariff is that it applies only to premium grades of steel, and then only to the steel in raw form—thus exempting from its effects large manufacturers who use standard grades of steel and foreign companies who import final products to the United States. To take just one example: Under the Bush administration's 40-percent tariff, a certain after-market part would now cost Rockford Acromatic $25 to $28 to produce, but the company can import it from China for $14 to $18. The Chinese have the advantage not only because of lower labor costs but because no tariff is placed on the Chinese product based on its steel content (it is almost entirely made of steel). So Rockford Acromatic now imports the parts, places them in their own boxes, and sells them on the domestic market.

Similar dynamics have dramatically changed the way Rockford Acromatic does business. Today, half of what the company sells is imported, packaged, and resold. At first glance, this seems to be simply "the market in action, compensating for disparate wage and materials costs in an increasingly integrated global economy." What gets lost in such an analysis, however, are the human costs of such "adjustments." Today, Rockford Acromatic employs about 60 people; at its height—when it made most of the products it sold—it employed 680. Two hundred and sixty of those jobs were here in Rockford; the rest, in Chicago, were tied to the aerospace industry, which has gone through similar changes. Even more discouraging: Most of the remaining 60 jobs are now low tech and low pay—approximately six to eight dollars per hour. Many of the employees are women; some speak very little English. They pack parts—for instance, a universal joint imported from China, boxed in Rockford, and exported to Canada. While Rockford Acromatic continues to make u-joints, it's hard to argue that it is more "efficient" to pay highly skilled machine operators $15 to $20 per hour than to hire more low-skilled packers. As Mr. Olson notes, applicants can no longer be reasonably sure that they can raise a family on their wages or remain at Rockford Acromatic for the rest of their working lives.

There are, however, some signs of hope for Olson's company. The 11th Street plant was built to store inexpensive rubber parts imported from China. Because the parts are so light, shipping was prohibitive on all but the largest orders, so the Olsons found it economically feasible to build a storage facility to house a million of the rubber parts so that they could import in mass quantities. Then, several years ago, they discovered an even better solution: They developed a proprietary process to produce the parts from a thermoplastic elastomer right there in the 11th Street facility. It is, as Mr. Olson says, an example of comparative advantage. But it's very different from Ricardo's classic example of England producing cloth while Portugal produced wine. For one thing, because shipping costs are still prohibitively high, Rockford Acromatic only has a comparative advantage in the domestic market; the company ships very few of the parts overseas, where the market is still dominated by Chinese parts. Still, that this limited comparative advantage has allowed Rockford Acromatic to continue to employ local people.

Others have not been so lucky, including those Rockfordians whose livelihoods were dependent, directly or indirectly, on the 200 jobs that have been lost locally over the years at Rockford Acromatic. The loss of every one of those jobs had a ripple effect in the local economy, which is something that individualist economists never quite grasp and economic statistics never adequately summarize. The Rockford Area Association of Realtors has trumpeted a recent increase in area home sales, but, behind each of those sales, there is a story, only part of which was hinted at when sales plummeted once again in January.

Last night me and Kate we laid in bed
talking about getting out.
Packing up our bags maybe heading south . . .

Seven years ago, when we bought our house, my wife and I never toured a home that was empty. Today, looking for a larger home, we've noticed that an increasing number of houses lie vacant, awaiting sale. The cleaning lady at Rockford Acromatic's 11th Street plant has been kept busy by local banks, who hire her to clean up houses that have been abandoned by people who can no longer make their mortgage payments. In a number of cases, she told Dean Olson, the homeowners have simply walked away from the house, leaving all of their possessions, including their cars.

I think of this story this morning, as I (over my wife's protests) load two school desks in my van from a trash pile in front of a house around the corner from ours. The homeschooling family had placed them at the curb fully loaded—schoolbooks, pencils, projects, and all. There was no "For Sale" sign, and I never noticed a moving van. No real-estate sales figures or unemployment statistics could ever adequately explain what caused them to leave in such a rush—or convey the despair they must have felt when they had to leave behind such a precious part of their children's lives.

I'm thirty-five we got a boy of our own now
Last night I sat him up behind the wheel and said son take a good look around
This is your hometown . . .

Scott P. Richert

Dean Olson displays an auto part, previously made in Rockford but now imported from China

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Letter From Serbia

by Aleksandar Rakovic

How Long, O Lord?

◆

Since the Middle Ages, the Balkan region of Kosovo-Metohia has witnessed firsthand the confrontation between Christianity and Islam. *Metohia* is a Greek word meaning "the Church's land," and Orthodox Christians consider Kosovo an outpost of their civilization. Muslims, on the other hand, continue to regard the region as a precious remnant of Islamic penetration into Europe. Although Christians and Muslims clashed many times in the course of the Turkish conquest of Christian Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, two events stand out in popular memory: the Battle of Kosovo (1389) between Serbs and Turks and the fall of Constantinople (1453).

When I visited the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew, in Istanbul, he asked me about the life of Christians in Kosovo and about the condition of their churches. We Serbs still call Constantinople *Carigrad* ("the emperor's city"), and I found it difficult to speak of the persecution of Christians in a city whose Christian heritage has suffered so much over the centuries. In Constantinople and Kosovo-Metohia, two sacred Christian places that were once the foundations of Greek and Serbian nationhood, there are now very few Christians. In Kosovo, even old houses and medieval churches, which once bore witness to Christian civilization, have been devastated—many of them just in the past few years.

In June 1999, international peacekeeping forces entered Kosovo-Metohia after 79 days of NATO bombing. Since that time, several hundred Christian Serbs have been murdered or kidnapped, and more than 180,000 have been driven into exile. The Serbs who remain have had to flee for their lives, abandoning their farms and villages to seek refuge in four major enclaves and several small villages. They do not expect to be able to return to their villages, which have, for the most part, been demolished and burned. In the cities, Albanians have moved into Serbian homes and apartments. Only in the northern enclave, which has access to the rest of Serbia, do Serbs have freedom of movement. Serbs who need to travel from enclave to enclave must be accompanied by peacekeeping forces; the alternative is to risk death. Serb delegates to the Kosovo Assembly travel to Pristina, the capital, in armored cars.

Albanian Muslims, backed by the international community, are now free to eradicate all signs that Christians ever lived in Kosovo. Of course, the desecration and destruction of Kosovo's Christian monuments is hardly a new story: It has been going on since the Turks first occupied the region. In 1455, the Turks destroyed the Monastery of the Holy Archangels in Prizren. This monastery and church, founded by Emperor Dusan, was one of the greatest medieval Orthodox monuments. A century and a half later, Muslims used the stones from the ruins to build a mosque in Prizren.

The destruction of the Holy Archangels Church is only one of thousands of stories that can be told of the Turkish occupation of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. In recent years, Albanian activists had been desecrating and pillaging Christian monuments in Kosovo. What has changed since 1999 is the resolve of the Albanians to eliminate all signs of Christianity: In less than three years, they have desecrated or ruined some 110 Orthodox churches and destroyed nearly 80 percent of Serbian cemeteries.

What has happened to Zociste Monastery is typical. Zociste was a medieval monastery dedicated to Saints Cosmas and Damian (who are also commemorated in an ancient church near the Roman Forum). In the old days, Albanian Muslims visited Zociste to pay their respects and kiss the relics in the hope of securing recovery for their sick friends and relatives. In 1998, however, the Kosovo Liberation Army took over the monastery and held all the monks captive. The monks were set free only when the Red Cross made a formal appeal. After the NATO bombing and the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army and the Serbian police, Albanian activists destroyed the monastery.

In July 2002, I (along with Hieromonk Jovan Culibrk) had several conversations with three high officers of the Kosovo Force (KFOR). At those meetings, which were held in the ancient center of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Patriarchate of Pec, Brig. Gen. Pierluigi Torelli, commanding officer of the KFOR International Brigade West, and his executive officer, Col. Raffaele Iubini, expressed their deepest regret both for the expulsion of the Serbian people from Kosovo and for the destruction of their monuments. Spanish Lt. Col. Ruiz de Pascual expressed the same sentiments, adding that, for soldiers in Kosovo, the Patriarchate of Pec had the same importance as the Vatican.

Despite the moral support of KFOR officers, Albanians every day throw stones at the Patriarchate and at the nuns who reside there. Iguman (Abbot) Teodosije, the head of Visoki Decani, the largest monastery in Kosovo, told me that Albanian provocateurs had started walking naked around the monastery in order to scandalize and humiliate the monks. The reaction of the KFOR soldiers has been to look the other way, probably out of embarrassment.

The international authority has recently claimed that the safety of the province has improved. Those claims do not reflect the reality, however, unless "safety" is interpreted in an unusually broad sense (*i.e.*, stay in hiding, and you may not be hurt). Serbs still do not have freedom of movement, and the destruction of churches has continued. During this "safer" period, Albanian activists burned down what was left of the Zociste Monastery after the destruction of 1999, and this second attack took place right after Bishop Artemije conducted a liturgy among the ruins, during which, on the hill above the monastery of the Holy Archangels, Albanians detonated dynamite. Under these circumstances, KFOR's decision (in November 2002) to remove guards from some churches is hard to explain, especially since, as soon as the guards were removed, two other churches were destroyed in an explosion.

To make matters worse, substantial rumors suggest that the KFOR soldiers who guard churches are to be replaced by the far less formidable UNMIK (U.N. Mission in Kosovo) troops. Eventually, so the story goes, UNMIK police would be

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replaced by the Kosovo Protection Corps, which is, in fact, the KLA under another name, though everyone knows that members of the KLA either carried out or at least incited the destruction of most of the Christian shrines. Even though U.N. Resolution 1244 explicitly states that the Yugoslav army and police are supposed to protect cultural monuments in Kosovo, it now seems clear that the resolution was never taken seriously by U.N. authorities.

Well-meaning officers are not enough. KFOR has refused to commit sufficient resources to protecting Serbian historical sites; in fact, some of the devastation of monuments took place near KFOR positions. KFOR officers try to excuse their failure on the grounds that they have managed to protect the most important medieval shrines—the Patriarchate of Pec, Visoki Decani, Gracanica—as well as the Church of Bogorodica (Mother of God) Ljeviska in Prizren. But their job was to protect the entire Christian and historical heritage of the region.

The actions of Albanian activists against Christian monuments represent an attempt to eradicate Christianity from Kosovo-Metohia. It is quite strange that the leaders of the "democratic" and "Christian" West, which sent KFOR troops and the UNMIK civil administration to bring peace to the region, have been silent in the face of the destruction of monuments that are treasures of the entire Christian world. The exodus of Christians, the demolished and pillaged churches, scattered crosses, and broken icons are a tragedy for all of Europe and for the Americas, which were settled by Europeans. Why the West, at the end of the 20th century, attacked a Christian and European people and then calmly presided over their expulsion at the hands of Islamic terrorists is a question that will have to be answered by future generations of historians.

Aleksandar Rakovic is a senior official with the Yugoslav Federal Secretariat of Religion.

Letter From Texas

by Wayne Allensworth

Memorial Day

◆

We used to go there on every Memorial Day—a small national cemetery off the road a piece in the woods. It was usually warm; the woods, deep, green, and moist. We would walk down a dirt path to the stone wall encircling the graves, sometimes passing others who had just visited there before us. My wife and I would tell the children to spread the flowers around, making sure each grave was marked with a red rose. Then we would walk back down the trail, leaving a flower at a lone marker near the edge of the woods. The marker was for a young man—about 20 or so, as I remember. Usually, the local Sons of Confederate Veterans had beat us to it, leaving flowers and a small Confederate Battle Flag to mark the spot where Clinton Hatcher was buried. The marker read: "He died defending his native state."

My two older children would ask me questions about the war. It was hard, trying to explain why we needed to remember them all as I watched the Stars and Stripes wave over the graves. I often wondered how Clinton Hatcher had felt, being forced by circumstance to take up arms against her. And the questions of the different flags and of what patriotism really means came up more than once. I remember telling the kids that Clinton Hatcher might have felt that those who had ordered the invasion of his state had taken the old flag away from him: Virginia was the home he was bound to defend. And I would tell them I hated that war, and that I couldn't think of many we had been in that we had really needed to be. But the flags remain: They are about who we are, no matter what the powers-that-be might otherwise want us to think. So we remember, though not always for the reasons they want us to.

But that was in Virginia. We moved home to Texas for good the summer before last, and I couldn't think of someplace close by to hold our little ceremony last year. So we stayed home on Memorial Day.

One TV station showed war movies from dawn to dusk. The ads featured the famous photo of the flag-raising on Iwo Jima. Those ads, together with a "news break" barrage of video clips about the "War on Terrorism," got me thinking about flags again—and about what the powers-that-be are doing to us and to Old Glory.

Judging by the chatter on the idiot box, it appears America's War on Terror has little to do with retribution for the September 11 attacks. "We," we are told by the usual suspects, are making the world safe for Diversity (it's always a big *D*), feminism (women should be voting in Afghanistan, not wearing burqas), and pornography ("free speech"). Anyway, Islam is a "religion of peace" (we mustn't ever, ever think of ourselves as a Christian nation). I began to feel a little like Clinton Hatcher must have felt, like they were taking the flag away from me—and my country with it.

I turn off the TV and walk upstairs. On a shelf in my office lies a 48-star flag. It had accompanied a War Department letter to my grandparents stating that a certain young man was presumed dead. I touch the corner of the flag and wonder whether I should hang it up somewhere.

I sit down in my office chair, staring at the red, white, and blue banner, remembering a cold day in January when I noticed the big American flag was down. She had waved in front of a builder's of-

LIBERAL ARTS

FAMILY VALUES?

"Yucatan, Mexico (3 December 2002)—A 22-year-old subject, carpenter by profession, was arrested and held in prison by the Secretary of State Protection and Transit, accused of sexually assaulting a turkey.

"Lorenzo Antonio Aquino was accused by Mrs. Martha Vesquez Manzanillo who discovered the individual inside her property, sleeping, naked, and embracing the turkey, which moments before he supposedly had raped.

"The carpenter faces charges for deviations of public morality and good customs, illegal entry, and damaging personal property.

"While making his initial statement to an agent of the Public Ministry, who showed him a photograph of the turkey, he said he remembered nothing."

—from an article by Martin Morita of the Grupo Reforma Servicio Informativo

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fice down the road, an outfit putting up paint-by-numbers houses as fast as the "undocumented workers" could slap them together. Like all such hucksters, they wrap everything in flags. American flags. Texas flags.

But the flag was down. I almost went on and forgot about it. I don't get agitated the way I used to, say, 30 years ago, when people started using flags for underwear, tablecloths, bath towels, shower curtains—even burning them. American flags. Confederate flags. Texas flags. So the patriotic builder's flag had fallen down. Long may Diversity wave.

I almost let it go. Almost.

There's ice on the road, and the wind is blowing something fierce. I pull the hood of my coat over my head and hang on to it, gripping it tightly with one hand and shivering. My fingers are so numb by the time I reach the flagpole that I don't even feel the steaming pitcher of hot water in my other hand. My glasses are fogging up.

And there she lies, crumpled and frozen solid. I pull out the folds as best I can, pouring the steaming water on the icy banner and the catch, frozen shut, still holding one end of the drooping flag to the frigid pole.

It's quite a job to get her loose from the frozen, broken line. I can't feel anything at all. When I get her loose, I walk over to the office and stand in the doorway, protecting myself from the howling wind.

There's no right way to do this that I know of. So I fold her up as best I can and sit her gingerly on the doorstep.

Wayne Allensworth lives in Keller, Texas, and wants his children to respect our flags.

Letter From Australia

by R.J. Stove

Take My Guns, Please

◆

Worried about your civil liberties? Concerned that the Potomac sniper's terror, though now concluded, will lead to the shredding of the Second Amendment? Then spare a thought for the helots Down Under, who are facing the prospect of unlimited gun confiscation after the horrific shooting spree of October 21, 2002, which killed two students and gravely injured five at Melbourne's Monash University.

Before the corpses had even been buried, the "Liberal" (a.k.a., with equal implausibility, "conservative") John Howard was on the airwaves, demanding even tougher antigun laws than the ones he had imposed soon after Tasmania's Port Arthur massacre, which occurred soon after he had won the prime ministry in 1996. Six years ago, only private rifle owners lost their weapons. Now, the planned targets are pistol owners. Federal Treasurer Peter Costello informed the Melbourne *Age* on October 24, 2002, that there are "too many handguns in our society." One particular aspect of the new campaign indicates how far Australians have gone down the road to serfdom since Mr. Howard first gained office. If he gets his way, we *Untermenschen* will have our fitness for future gun ownership judged by (Aldous Huxley, eat your heart out) "compulsory psychological tests."

Victorian Labor Party Premier Steve Bracks, head of a minority administration relying on rural independents' legislative support (and facing an election on November 30, 2002), at first voiced skepticism about further laws. Not so Robert Doyle, Mr. Bracks' Liberal opponent, whom Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* quoted on October 24 as wanting to go beyond even Mr. Howard's confiscatory ambitions. Mr. Doyle sought a ban on all private pistol ownership. Sure enough, it took Mr. Bracks only 24 hours to abandon his brief spasm of valor and to vow full public support for Mr. Howard's aims, quibbling only over the details of the Howard plan. (There are 45,000 known pistols in Victoria; of these, private ownership accounts for only around 14,000. The rest already belong to the police, the armed services, and other branches of government.)

This gyration did Mr. Bracks no electoral harm. The November 30 elections gave his administration 62 Lower House seats out of a possible 88, and Labor gained control of the Upper House for the first time in almost two decades. Altogether, Mr. Bracks achieved the biggest landslide victory that Victoria's Parliament has seen since 1859.

Naturally, Howard, Bracks, and Doyle have never heard of Joyce Lee Malcolm's *Guns and Violence*, or Richard Poe's *The Seven Myths of Gun Control*, or John Lott's *More Guns, Less Crime*, or any of the other printed data, copious enough by now to deforest Brazil, on the sheer absurdity—even in a once-deferential culture like England's—of trying to redeem the depraved by disarming the honest. And, of course, the loudest media voice in favor of gun laws has been that of the Rupert Murdoch empire, true to its dogma of howling down all tyrannies except its own. (Particularly objectionable in this regard has been the Adelaide *Advertiser*, which repeatedly distinguished itself by describing the callous murder on October 14, 2002, of a South Australian mental-health boss as an "execution.")

After the 1996 disarmament, conspiracy theories abounded—on the internet and in lovingly misspelled handbills—concerning how Mr. Howard planned to send his enemies to death camps and knowingly took orders from something called "the Zionist Occupation Government." The truth is more depressingly banal. Mr. Howard is not a conscious stooge of Kissinger, Greenspan, Sharon, or the duke of Edinburgh. He is not even consumed by personal greed, whether for power or for pelf. He is merely a semiliterate school prefect, haunted (to an extent remarkable even for antipodean statesmen) by what Mencken would have called the nagging fear that someone, somewhere, might be free.

Understandably, the prime minister remains euphoric over his third-term triumph in 2001. Federal Opposition Leader Simon Crean temporarily presides over a party so divided as to have incurred, at a New South Wales by-election on October 19, 2002, its worst loss in 65 years. Every Australian state premier is now solidly antigun. So it would be nice to suppose that the prime minister's nannystatism is at loggerheads with what Rousseau called the general will. Nice, but false.

R.J. Stove writes from Melbourne, Australia.

MOVING?

ANYTOWN, U.S.A. 2001

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Europe Skeptical About NATO Enlargement

On November 21, 2002, NATO leaders meeting in Prague invited seven ex-communist nations to join their ranks in an expansion termed "historic." The three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (the alliance will, for the first time, include former Soviet territory), as well as Bulgaria, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Rumania are expected to become full members at the next summit in 2004.

The reporting in the U.S. media was bland, while editorial commentary largely focused on the political benefits, organizational challenges, and financial costs of the expansion. The foreign press, however, raised substantial questions about the purpose of the enlargement—and, indeed, of NATO itself. It was left to Europeans to remark that "transforming" the alliance into an antiterrorist peacekeeping force represents a tacit admission that NATO does not know what to do with itself. The *Irish Times* asserted that "NATO has failed to answer serious questions about its future role in enhancing world security" and warned that no answers will come from gatherings of smiling politicians with "bunkers full of missiles with no target to aim at."

As *Jane's Foreign Report* pointed out some months before the Prague Summit, the declining importance of NATO reflects the fact that "the Americans do not trust the Alliance's decision-making capacity [following the] Kosovo war in 1999," during which "the USA had to get the agreement of all other 18 member states before any operation, and often this involved heated debates and compromises, sometimes over single targets," which Washington saw "as an unnecessary encumbrance which should not be repeated":

> So, when NATO responded to the terrorist atrocities in the USA . . . by invoking the famed Article 5 in its founding treaty (which deems an attack against one member state as an attack against them all), the USA thanked the Alliance for its concern, but proceeded to mount its own independent operation in Afghanistan. The Europeans were duly involved in this operation but as individual allies of the USA rather than as part of the Alliance.

The editor-in-chief of the Portuguese daily *Público* noted that, for the United States, "the allies don't help, they get in the way, complicate things, and slow down decision making"; in that framework, "being in NATO is a shameful irrelevance for the allies, since they can do little more than show off their military decorations and act offended when they are ignored." In the same spirit, the *Financial Times* of London observed on November 21 that "[n]ot even the most determinedly faithful would try to revive a marriage by adopting seven new family members." But "to the bigger question of what this partnership is really for in the 21st century, there will be deafening silence":

> In Europe too, recent events suggest some of the most important countries regard NATO as at best an irrelevance, at worst another opportunity for the United States to antagonize them . . . [I]f the Bush administration's national security strategy . . . is to be the defining feature of U.S. defence strategy for the next 50 years, most Europeans do not want anything to do with it. And, for all the fanfare, it is getting harder to disguise the views of policymakers on both sides.

In France, a commentator for *Le Journal du Dimanche* complained that "George W. Bush has a pretty clear idea of what the future NATO should be: the Pentagon's Foreign Legion," while an editorial in *Le Monde* warned that,

> For Washington, NATO must serve America's policies. We cannot help but deplore America's mugging of the Alliance. But as long as the Europeans remain incapable of making themselves heard, Europe's protest will remain useless.

The same theme was echoed in Germany, with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* noting that "NATO's new structure grants the United States even more power than before":

> the Europeans have to realize that they are not equal partners anymore but dependents. While the NATO Council still needs the support of all members to initiate Alliance action, the weight of U.S. power will be the decisive factor in the end.

Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin noted that "rarely has a NATO summit been dominated by the United States as much as Prague" and that there is hardly any European resistance to Bush: "A whole continent has backed down." The *Frankfurter Rundschau* focused on the lack of informed public debate about the "new" NATO:

> Those who want the NATO whose first steps were made in Prague, must negotiate a new Atlantic Treaty. This will be difficult and . . . it may be possible that some members will leave the Alliance. It is a bad sign that NATO is dodging such a debate over principles and sticks to the illusion of historical continuity.

In Italy, *Il Foglio* also focused on the unheralded but all-too-real change in NATO's character: The seven new members will join an alliance that is much different from the one that they hoped to join a few years ago: a 26-member NATO,

> with the United States less and less

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committed on the European front and less and less interested in involving the Alliance, as such, in its most relevant military operations, and with Russia no longer an open enemy or an invisible participant, but rather an external interlocutor and even a partner in certain fields. Furthermore, a NATO that is . . . tuned on the Pentagon's wavelength rather than that of NATO headquarters in Mons.

The leading Italian daily, *Corriere della Sera*, noted that self-congratulatory rhetoric has not concealed the underlying dilemma of the new NATO:

> The enlargement that has taken NATO as far as Russia's borders adds little to its military capability . . . The effectiveness of the Alliance, in fact, is jeopardized by a long-time problem, revived by new roles: the growing gap between the financial-technological involvement of the United States and that of its traditional European allies.

Further to the left, *La Repubblica* sought an historical parallel:

> Like the Roman Empire 18 centuries ago, right at the time of its maximum territorial expansion and the virtually unchallenged hegemony of its values, the NATO alliance is also experiencing the germs of decline and the emergence, under the crust of routine self-celebrations, of the fault of a growing internal split between its Western and Eastern souls. So much so that it would be legitimate to wonder whether NATO's ultimate goal may have become that of keeping its pieces together under a single leadership—American leadership, of course, thus preventing each of the two souls to autonomously [*sic*] decide on its fate.

An editorialist for the Slovenian daily *Delo* reflected the awareness of the changing character of NATO among its future new members:

> Had Slovenia been invited . . . five years ago, that invitation would have meant more than everything for many Slovenes. Five years later, there is little satisfaction in drawing closer to the political icon, from which the United States has been scraping the last remains of a powerful transatlantic alliance . . . Europe is humiliated, NATO marginalized, demoralized; Bush—with his war—is on top, leader of the world.

In Russia, most commentators looked for a silver lining in what was generally seen as a Western snub of President Putin, who had repeatedly argued that NATO's expansion to Russia's western borders was unnecessary and provocative. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, speaking for the Russian military, focused on the discrepancy between old and new members:

> Weighed down with a load of passengers as poor and unsure of themselves as they are ambitious, the NATO juggernaut is very slow, so slow it can stall. It takes the White House a lot of effort and time to keep the juggernaut on the right track. Washington is increasingly irritated with the EuroNATO allies being reluctant to invest much in military programs and the renovation and development of their military potential. Under the circumstances, Washington, analysts say, may find it much easier to form a new alliance, with close trade and economic ties among its members. It might keep its membership to a minimum but whoever might be admitted would support the Chief Ally's ideas and goals without demur.

In many smaller European countries, the commentary was unenthusiastic. Austria's *Kurier* predicted that, after Prague, "the United States will make the decisions and fight the wars, but it will be up to the Europeans to pay for the reconstruction efforts." In Belgium, *De Financieel-Economische Tijd* wrote that "the Americans increasingly view NATO as a useful toolbox":

> Just like the UN is being pushed into a secondary role, NATO seems to become an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. Every criticism of the United States triggers a grumpy response . . . Bush does not need NATO for his plans regarding Iraq. He will choose his partners in function of their loyalty and obedience.

So he will. What European commentators fail to grasp, however, is that NATO's eastward expansion may prove detrimental to the interests of the United States as well. It locks the United States into a permanent, open-ended foreign entanglement. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the stated rationale for NATO's existence had disappeared. Yet, instead of proclaiming victory and closing shop, NATO has invented a new mission over the past decade: that of promoter of democracy, protector of human rights, and guardian against instability. Its area of operations is no longer limited, and its mandate is entirely self-generated. NATO's war against Serbia in the spring of 1999 marked a decisive shift in its mutation from a defensive alliance to a supranational security force based on the doctrine of "humanitarian intervention." The trusty keeper of the gate has become a roaming vigilante.

The United States now formally obliges herself to protect a host of new clients right in Russia's backyard, in an area that had never been deemed vital to her interests. She assumes responsibility for perpetual maintenance of a host of disputed frontiers drawn arbitrarily by communists, with little regard for ethnicity or history. This policy is illogical. Either the United States is serious in her commitment to risk a thermonuclear war for the sake of, say, Estonia's border with Russia (which is insane), or she is not serious, which is dangerously frivolous. Instead of pandering to the former Soviet satellites' insecurity, the United States should encourage them to comprehend that a Russian revival—focused on her links with Europe and a strategic understanding with America—benefits everyone, because of the underlying common interest of all three in keeping Islamic marauders at bay.

To achieve those goals, we have no need of NATO. So what to do with it? The realistic answer is "nothing." An unintended but inevitable consequence of the latest expansion will be to propel the alliance further down the long road to irrelevance and eventual oblivion. For that reason alone, expanding it to include the Balkans—and perhaps Russia herself—would be a very good idea. ©

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CHRISTIANITY

News From the Christmas Front

by Tom Piatak

It has been over a year since *Chronicles* published my piece "Happy Holidays? Bah! Humbug!" (*Vital Signs*, December 2001) and *Vdare.com* used it to announce its 2001 War Against Christmas Competition. I am still receiving mail on the essay, and I thought I would give *Chronicles* readers an idea of how the War Against Christmas is progressing. Some of the critical letters have been especially illuminating, though not always in the way their authors intended.

One correspondent informed me that "Actually, December 25th is the birthday of Mithras" and that "December 25th is Saturnalia." Although profoundly silly, this line of argument is surprisingly common, as aspiring deconstructionists routinely claim that Christmas is "really" a celebration of the winter solstice. Of course, none of the growing number of faux Christmases being foisted on us by the multiculturalists—Kwanza, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Diwali, Bodhi Day, the Birth of Guru Gobind Singh, Dongji, Chinese New Year, *etc.*—is ever subjected to this sort of critical analysis.

It is probably true that December 25 was chosen as the date to commemorate Christ's birth to coincide with (and supplant) the pagan festival of *Natalis invicti solis*. But the holiday that has been the major festival in the West for millennia is *Christmas*, not some extinct pagan celebration. Over the centuries, Christmas has become an integral part of our culture, incorporating and transforming some pre-Christian customs and inspiring a wealth of new ones, resulting in a splendid, multifaceted celebration that is a reflection of the genius of Western culture. Christmas has inspired beauty wherever it has been observed. The treasury of Christmas music, for example, is unparalleled by that of any other holiday and is the work of both famous composers and inspired folk artists from every corner of Christendom. The lesson to be learned from the defunct pagan festivals that preceded Christmas is not that Christmas ought to be abolished but that we risk losing Christmas if we allow the multiculturalists to replace Christmas with "the holidays."

Another correspondent told me that he had come across my essay while looking for an "inclusive holiday e-card." Not surprisingly, he was shocked by what he found, telling me that "[t]he position you had in the article seems to be in line with the thinking behind the Iranian Revolution." He also offered an instructive history lesson, making the obligatory reference to America's dark past when "most slaves [were] converted to Protestantism," "most American Indians perished," and "Americans chose [marginalization and isolation] and passed restrictive immigration laws"; he cheerfully noted, however, that, "by the 1960s, the U.S. changed course and chose recognition and inclusion. . . . what's more, we opened the borders to allow Buddhists, Muslims, atheists, pagans, and people from around the world to join our society." Because of this change in direction, we "would not allow Christianity to dominate the public arena," and we now have a "free society, one that is ever-changing and permissive, not static or oppressive."

It may come as news to the multiculturalists, but America began in 1776, not in 1965. Throughout most of our history, Americans have enjoyed a spirited public celebration of Christmas, because there is no contradiction between Christmas and American ideals. And I was inspired to write my essay not by the Iranian Revolution but by my memories of the Christmases that I experienced growing up in America. There was nothing un-American about the effusive public celebrations of Christmas that I recall, unless kindness, generosity, and joy have suddenly fallen out of favor.

Nor were those celebrations of Christmas "static or oppressive." I think they are well represented by *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, the wonderful program that premiered the year after I was born. The show mentions no other holiday but Christmas, centers around the production of a Christmas play in a public school, features Linus quoting from St. Luke's Gospel, and ends with the Peanuts singing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." It remains popular because it is rooted in the real celebration of a real holiday, not in a contrived celebration of a politically correct alternative. It embodies not just Charles Schulz's genius but the spirit that so many Americans associate with Christmas. Only an imagination twisted by ideology could look at such a program and see "oppression." (Indeed, one of the biggest fans I know of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is Jewish.)

The most measured of my critical correspondents was a Buddhist chaplain. He may have noticed the essay because it mentioned Bodhi Day, the day of the Buddha's "enlightenment," generally observed in early December and now being promoted as a faux Christmas by some multiculturalists. The way I learned of Bodhi Day is a perfect example of how the War Against Christmas is being waged. A friend of mine works as an engineer for NASA. His NASA facility traditionally played Christmas music over the p.a. system, a custom enjoyed by my friend and most of his coworkers. Then, one day, the music stopped. Shortly thereafter, NASA sent out a memo informing its employees of Bodhi Day and asking them to be sensitive toward it. This is the War Against Christmas in a nutshell: the suppression of a tradition enjoyed by the majority and the elevation of a holiday virtually no one had ever heard of before.

To his credit, my Buddhist correspondent did not complain that Bodhi Day was being given short shift. He informed me that "I don't celebrate Christmas, unless you count the exchanging of presents with friends and family, which is more of a cultural tradition in America than a religious one." And he defended the displacement of "Merry Christmas" by "Happy Holidays":

> As the employees in retail stores, etc. have no way of knowing what religion (if any) their customers adhere to, they are using a phrase that is neutral, so that they can wish a generic season of happiness to all, regardless of religion.

Actually, employees in retail stores do have a pretty good way of determining what holiday is being celebrated by the customers who mysteriously arrive after

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every Thanksgiving to buy presents. Since the overwhelming majority of Americans celebrate Christmas, and an even higher percentage of those flocking to the malls after Thanksgiving are doing so to buy Christmas presents, a retail employee can conclude that most of his customers would appreciate being wished a "Merry Christmas." Indeed, it seems churlish that the retailers of America, whose well-being depends in large measure on Christmas, are increasingly afraid even to mention the holiday to which they owe their good fortune.

Admittedly, some non-Christians (like the Buddhist chaplain) have decided to exchange gifts during the Christmas season. But those who adopt Christian customs can hardly complain about others who assume that they celebrate Christmas. And I do not understand why wishing a stranger "Merry Christmas" is now considered singularly offensive—so offensive that the phrase is heard less often these days in public than the profanity that has come to characterize much of our entertainment and conversation. (Indeed, television stations generally wish their viewers "Happy Hanukkah" and "Happy Kwanza" but offer only a bland "Happy Holidays" to their Christian viewers, even on December 25.) Anyone wishing a stranger "Merry Christmas" is not only acting on the statistically well-justified assumption that the other person does celebrate Christmas but is offering the greeting as an expression of good will. Most non-Christians are not multiculturalist zealots, and they understand this.

All news from the Christmas front is not bad. I have continued to receive many favorable comments on my essay. A Catholic parish in New Jersey distributed a copy of it as part of its Advent package, and several parishioners wrote to express their gratitude. Another correspondent wrote that, "even though it seems a daunting task, I don't intend to give up Christmas without a fight." And there are signs that more people are beginning to join this fight. I have noticed columnists bemoaning the assault on Christmas, and even articles carrying the bad news that The Gap discourages its employees from mentioning Christmas have questioned the reasoning behind such directives. Some Catholics have filed suit against the New York City schools, which allow the display of menorahs and the Muslim star and crescent but forbid Nativity scenes, according to the *New York Post* (December 11, 2002).

I remain confident that the great majority of Americans resent the assault on Christmas. And as long as these Americans can be coaxed out of silence to fight for our traditions, this is one assault we can repulse.

Tom Piatak writes from Cleveland, Ohio.

Heavenly Windows

by Fr. Alister Anderson

Recently, I read some words that were spoken by Saint Macarius, a fourth-century monk who expresses so powerfully what God in Jesus Christ came and continues to come to do among us:

> When man falls under the power of the darkness of the devil's night, he is troubled and distressed by the dreadful wound of sin that blows in him. He is shaken and trembles through all his nature. His soul, his thoughts, his understanding are shaken. All the limbs of his body are shaken and no part of either soul or body escapes unharmed from that sin that dwells in him. But, in like manner, there is a day of light and a Divine breeze of the Holy Spirit which refreshes the souls and bodies that stand in the day of the light of God. It penetrates the soul and its thoughts and all the members of the body. It refreshes them with a Divine unbelievable rest. And as in the night of sin and error, when man is clothed with darkness, and wears the garment of blasphemy, unbelief, indifference, arrogance, greed and lust, then comes Jesus Christ who tears off the clothing of the kingdom of darkness. In Him and through Him we put on the new and heavenly man who is Jesus Christ. And in Him once again, we correspond and conform our eyes to His eyes; our ears to His ears, our hands to His hands; our heart and head to His heart and head, all pure and wearing the heavenly image in which God made us.

Saint Macarius's words illustrate how this new and heavenly man finds visual expression in the art of the icon. In the icon, the Orthodox Church sees an important expression of our Faith in its totality. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the restoration of the holy icons (the victory of our spiritual ancestors over the iconoclasts who attempted to remove the icon from all our churches) is, at the same time, the victory and restoration of the Orthodox Faith.

The icon portrays a person who has passed from death to life and who has become a new creation through faith in Christ, Who makes all things new and good. Saint Paul wrote, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). By taking on our nature, the Son of God reveals the true identity of every man and woman as created in the image and likeness of God. The icon therefore depicts the person as a new being who is transformed, healed, and restored to God's image.

Icons portray holy people who have grown into the likeness of God. Being made in the image of God is not the same as being made in His likeness. God made us in His image, which is perfect because God is perfect. But we deliberately allow that image to be defaced through our manifold sins. For us to be like the heavenly icons in Orthodox churches, we must try to lead holy lives by submitting ourselves to the Lord's authority and His commandments. For us to be made in the likeness of God means that we must do what our Lord wants us to do and believe that He gives us the power to do it. We must understand the Orthodox doctrine of *synergeia*, which means that we must work with God's grace to grow toward His likeness. That is a lifelong spiritual pilgrimage.

My next remark reveals my bias as an Orthodox Christian priest. I say this not to discredit Western religious art, because much of it is spiritually moving. But there is a great difference between Western-Latin religious art and Eastern Orthodox religious art, which is expressed through the icon. For many years, I had been accustomed to looking at Western or Latin religious art in which the physical body, even in a saint's martyrdom and suffering, is beautiful and well proportioned, even sensuous and romantic.

Several years ago, when I looked at Orthodox icons, I thought them a kind of primitive art. Those depicted, even the Lord Jesus, looked physically out of proportion and stylized. The eyes are too large; the ears, too flaring; the nose, too

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long and narrow; the mouth, too tight and small. Now, through many years of study and worship, I see our icons as profoundly more spiritually arresting than most Western religious art. They are sacramental entities. They depict a spirituality that transcends the physical form. Icons enable me to see and feel the spiritual power of the holy people of God and the events in their lives that made them holy. Icons help me to look at who I really am and what I want to be. I am no longer captivated by the romantic and the frequently sentimental and sensuous perfection of the physical body that is depicted in Western religious art. Now, it is easier for me to go beyond the physical image to the spiritual reality to apprehend the real condition of my own spiritual life. In short, through the icon, theology becomes experiential. That is why icons are called "windows into heaven."

Icons reveal the mystery of new life in Christ. Their faces have looked upon eternal life, and they radiate victory over sin and death through their faith and love for Jesus Christ. Their faces show us what we should be looking for in this life before we die. Icons are mostly about faces. The remainder of the body, below the head, is relatively unimportant. Your face tells others who you really are.

The natural form of the faces of icons has been altered. They have the look of spiritual power that transforms them into wholeness, peace, and serenity. Their faces are never depicted in profile. They are turned toward us and look directly at us. The people in whom Christ dwells look us full in the face. Like Christ, they live for others. They look at us in hope and prayer that Christ will live in us. Saint Macarius says that "a spiritual man cannot be depicted as incomplete; a soul which has been illumined is all light and has no part behind it, but instead is all forward." The person in whom Christ dwells is turned toward others. He attracts us by his gaze and opens up to us his inner life. The profile, on the other hand, suggests fragmentation; it signifies a fading away, the absence of the person. It implies dishonesty and being two-faced. No true icon is depicted in profile—except that of Judas Iscariot. The overall expression of the faces of icons is one of peace and long-suffering. This is the peace of Christ, Who was not ashamed to be born in the filth of a stable; Who was not resentful because He was poor; Who was not embarrassed to sit on the donkey. He did not become angry when He was mocked. Even when nailed to the Cross, He preserves His serene glory. Even when resurrected, He does not become proud or haughty or arrogant.

Consider the face of the icon. The eyes, the windows of the soul, are always open and enlarged. They are that part of the face in which spiritual life is concentrated. The large eyes—especially those of Christ, the Theotokos, and the archangels—reveal wisdom, awareness, and insight. They see you just as you are. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be sound, thy whole body shall be full of light. But, if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness" (Saint Matthew 6:22ff.). The eyes of icons have seen a redeemed world. They have also seen Heaven, and they want to tell us about it so that we will turn away from the way that leads to Hell.

The ears of icons are somewhat enlarged and usually flare out from the side of the head. The holy people depicted in this manner hear the voice of God. The enlarged ears remind us what Jesus said to Satan when He was tempted in the wilderness: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If we want to live by the Word of God, we must *hear* that Word. Jesus said, "He that hath ears, let him hear." Saint James said: "Let every man be swift to hear [and] slow to speak." Our world is full of sounds: strange sounds; deafening sounds; terrifying sounds. The noise of this world is seductive, filthy, deceitful, chaotic. Much of it is the voice of the Devil, and that is why the saints of all ages have urged the faithful to revere silence. They urge us to hear the words of the prophet Habakkuk, who said, "The LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:20).

The saints want us to hear the still, small voice of God, Who spoke to the prophet Elijah and Who speaks to our consciences every moment of every day we live. Jesus Christ calls us out of this world to hear Him and to serve Him. The Greek word for *church* is εκκλησια, which comes from εκ and καλεο—"those called out." We are called out by the voice of Christ, Who says, "follow me." Unless we close our ears to the world's incessant clamor, however, we will not hear His voice. Instead, we will be pounded senseless by this world's delusions, disappointments, and defeats. We will never hear the Lord calling us to repentance so that we can embrace His strength, hope, mercy, forgiveness, and love.

The mouths of icons are small and closed, which is in keeping with the teachings of the Bible about the mouth. Read what Saint James says about the mouth and the tongue inside it:

> The tongue is a fire; a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell . . . the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.

Icons remind us what Solomon said in one of his Proverbs: "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (Proverbs 13:3). They remind us of what King David said in one of his Psalms: "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle" (Psalm 39:1). Most of all, they remind us of Jesus' words: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matthew 15:11).

Icons want us to be quiet. Their silence is comforting and reassuring. The small, closed mouth combats the sensuous and voluptuous temptations we see in so much art and photography today. It pleads with us to stop yelling and arguing among ourselves. It encourages us to be peacemakers and reconcilers, even as Jesus came into this world to reconcile us to God. It reminds us that, when we do speak, we must speak the truth. It reminds us that we must keep our big, bragging mouths shut, so that we can learn by listening to the Truth.

The nose of the icon is elongated and very narrow, which reminds us of what we must breathe in and what we must breathe out. The icon asks us to exhale the sickening smells of this world's foulness. We all know very well the smells of this world's lies, greed, selfishness, perverse living, arrogance, and hate. The only hate we can breathe in is our hate of the Devil and all of his works. The saints have breathed out all the stinking sins of this world because they have breathed in

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the Breath of God. They have breathed in faith, hope, and love, as well as justice, temperance, prudence, and fortitude. The Breath of God is what a living godly soul should be—what we should want to be. Moses tells us in the second chapter of Genesis: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The icon calls you to be a living soul for God.

Every Orthodox Christian has his own way of preparing for worship. When I say my morning prayers, I stand before the icons in my study. I remind myself that the icon symbolizes the entire human person, body and soul, the sense of sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch; even the hair and garments as being unified and made harmonious. The icon at which I gaze is a visible expression of the victory of mankind over all the inner divisions and chaos in man and in the world. The whole body of the icon is no longer what Plato called "the prison of the soul." It becomes a "window into heaven" and a picture of the temple of the Holy Spirit, which I want my soul and body to be. Who, then, can help but kiss that spiritual representation of God? And then after the kiss, I ask myself, *Do I look for God as this holy person does*? Then, I look at the ears of the icon: *Do I listen for God's voice*? Then, I look at the mouth: *Do I always try to speak the truth of God*? Then, I look at the nose: *Do I breathe in the Breath of God and all for which God stands*?

We need to remind ourselves that we are icons of Christ to the world around us. The world looks at us and wonders if we are Christ-like, as Christians ought to be. When we think of ourselves as members of the Church, do we remember that our own congregation serves as an icon of Christ to all the world around us? Each congregation is a Christian family that is expected to believe and act as if there really is a Heaven and a Hell. We are on a spiritual pilgrimage toward Heaven and are praying that the world will follow Christ as we are trying to. We should act in such a way that others will see what the icons tell us—that the riches and pleasures of this world are not important and never to be trusted.

What do you need to pray for to be worthy to enter the Kingdom of God? If you look at the icon and pray with the saint depicted, you will know what you must do. The icon is not only a window into Heaven but a window into your own soul's health.

The Rev. Fr. Alister Anderson is a priest of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church. He preached this sermon recently in St. Catherine Orthodox Church, Hagerstown, Maryland.

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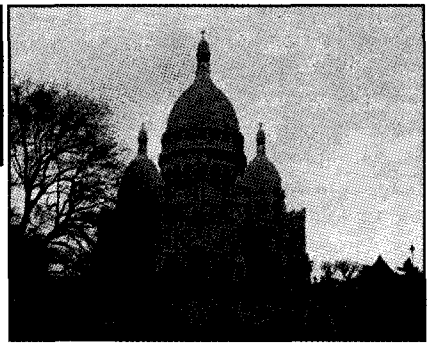

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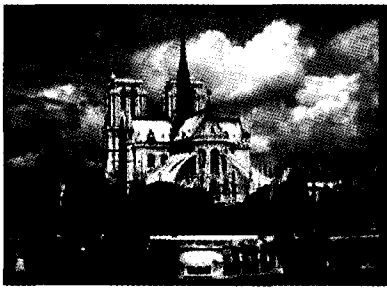

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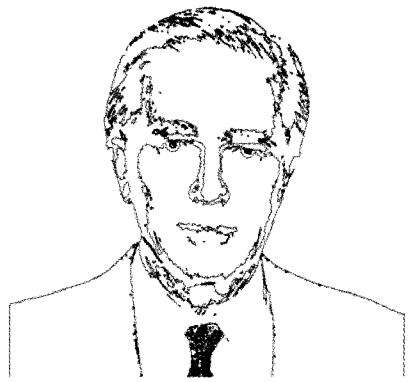
by George McCartney

Be Afraid of Virginia Woolf



"CAUTION: Reading Virginia Woolf may be hazardous to your health."

This warning should be slapped on Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* and its film adaptation by Stephen Daldry. Cunningham's tendentious treatment of Woolf's last years and her continuing literary influence is just honest enough to raise some alarms.

And now another caution: In the analysis that follows, I have felt it necessary to deal with the narrative's conclusion, so you may want to skip the next several paragraphs until you see the film for yourself—and I think you should. It is vital to confront infections at their earliest stage, especially those that present themselves with such a glossily innocuous air.

Woolf was undeniably a brilliant writer whose narrative experiments with stream of consciousness opened new possibilities for the novelists who followed her. At the same time, her works served as carriers of a virulent subjectivism that continues to infect susceptible readers. For Woolf and her Bloomsbury circle, the individual was the only arbiter of meaning and morality in a world they were convinced was metaphysically pointless. In his memoirs, John Maynard Keynes recalled the Bloomsburians' arrogant sensibility, dramatized in Woolf's novels. Looking back on his youth, he writes with bemused detachment that, for them,

> nothing mattered except states of mind, our own and other people's of course, but chiefly our own. These states of mind were not associated with action or achievement or with consequences. They consisted in timeless passionate states of contemplation and communion, largely unattached to "before" and "after". . . . How did we know what states of mind were good? This was a matter . . . direct unanalysable intuition about which it was useless and impossible to argue. We were living the specious present, nor had begun to play the game of consequences. . . . We repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom. We were . . . in the strict sense of the term immoralists.

If Keynes were writing today, he might express himself more succinctly: *If it feels good, do it; consequences be damned!*

Cunningham, however unintentionally, uncovers some of these damnable consequences, and Daldry's film makes them indelibly graphic. Following the novel closely, the film weaves three narratives together, each centered on a woman confronting a moral crisis. There is Woolf in 1928, toying with the suicide she will ultimately commit in 1941. Woolf is played by Nicole Kidman, who wears a ridiculous prosthetic nose that is supposed to resemble Woolf's but only succeeds in making her look like a cross-eyed loon. (This, of course, will guarantee her an Oscar nomination.)

The second narrative concerns Laura (Julianne Moore), a California mother carrying her second child, who feels stifled by the standardization of American life in 1949. She lives in tract housing with her beefy husband, Dan (John C. Reilly), who somehow manages to be both doting and insensitive. We meet him coming back from the florist on his own birthday with a bouquet to give to his dearest before he goes to work. Then, he makes breakfast for her and their three-year-old son as Laura lingers in bed reading, portentously enough, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. Clearly, the man is a clod. No wonder Laura dreads getting into bed with him at day's end. Of course, there's also the little matter of her daytime smooching with a neighboring housewife.

The third narrative deals with Clarissa (Meryl Streep, who should have played Woolf, having, so to speak, a nose for the part). A 1990's Manhattan publisher, Clarissa shares her improbably spacious Greenwich Village apartment with Julia, her 19-year-old daughter, the product—if that is not too strong a word for it—of artificial insemination, courtesy of an anonymous "donor." Rounding out this modern ménage is Clarissa's lesbian lover. Clarissa's professional claim to distinction is that she has published the work of Richard (Ed Harris), a homosexual poet who is dying of AIDS. When she was 18, she had a summertime affair with him and has remained devoted ever since, constantly obsessing about what would have happened had they stayed together instead of following their same-sex inclinations.

The film crosscuts back and forth among the women, each narrative circumscribed by the events of 24 hours, following Woolf's attempt to render the essence of Mrs. Dalloway's life in a single day. As their stories unfold, we discover that these three women are related by parallel experiences. Each has been balked by moral and social conventions. Woolf feels guilty about not being sufficiently grateful to her husband, Leonard, and not having borne children, as her sister Vanessa has; Laura feels guilty because she does not want the husband and children she has; Clarissa faults herself for not having transcended the trammels of the female sex and forged a permanent relationship with Richard, however conjugally irregular it might have proved. Furthermore, each faces the question of suicide: Woolf commits it; Laura considers it; and Clarissa witnesses it when she fails to prevent Rich-

The Hours

Produced by Scott Rudin and Miramax Films
Directed by Stephen Daldry
Screenplay by David Hare
from Michael Cunningham's novel
Distributed by Paramount Pictures

Confessions of a Dangerous Mind

Produced by Andrew Lazar and Miramax Films
Directed by George Clooney
Screenplay by Charlie Kaufman
from the book by Chuck Barris
Distributed by Artisan Entertainment

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ard from tossing his AIDS-wasted body from his fifth-floor window.

Then, at last, there is a more palpable connection—and it's a real kicker. Laura, now in her late 70's, suddenly invades Clarissa's narrative on the occasion of Richard's funeral. Until this moment, Cunningham has withheld a pivotal piece of information: Laura is Richard's mother. She had abandoned him, her daughter, and her devoted husband not long after the lummox brought her those flowers. After the funeral, she soulfully confides to Clarissa, "It's a terrible thing to outlive the members of one's family." Her daughter was run down by a car while still a young girl, and her husband died of a heart attack not long after. Her sorrow, however, seems manufactured. She has done far more than outlive them: She betrayed them, a deed that may well have had no small part in hastening them into eternity. Nevertheless, we are led to believe Laura is a sympathetic, if not brave, character for having defected from her family obligations. As she explains to Clarissa, she was suffocating in her suburban life. "It was death; I chose life"—for herself, that is. Cunningham gives Laura the surname *Brown*, echoing Woolf's famous essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in which she advances the modernist cause: Mrs. Brown—*i.e.*, the ordinary self—must be liberated from the tyranny of social convention encoded in earlier fiction. "At whatever cost of life, limb and damage to property," Woolf had declared, "Mrs. Brown must be rescued, expressed, and set in her high relations to the world." Surely, the cost of three lives is a small sacrifice to offer on the altar of Laura's all-consuming selfhood.

Has Cunningham no sense of family values? Fear not. He pays them mete, if modern, tribute. Consider Clarissa's devotion to her daughter, the spunky and beautiful Julia (Clare Danes). This young lady is so marvelously balanced that Clarissa thinks "she could be a figure from the Fifties, if you made a few relatively minor alterations." Would one of those be the presence of her father? Of course not: Such a thought would spoil the narrative's progression from the unenlightened, moralistic past to the sunny, liberated present. Cunningham's unstated—but clearly implied—thesis is that the last century has seen the liberation of the self from crippling convention. Woolf was driven to madness and suicide by socially imposed limits. As a young woman, Laura nearly suffered the same fate but fortunately "chose life." Clarissa, intact (if not wholly unscathed), has escaped convention altogether.

The lesson is clear. We cannot allow traditional sex roles to stifle us. We must live for ourselves, honoring our own passionate "states of mind." If you must bear the burden of children, it is so much more sensible to do so by personal decree. What better evidence do we need than Julia, the test-tube baby who grows up to be a marvel of physical and moral health? Meanwhile, the son of what began as a traditional marriage ages into a self-loathing poet, stunted of body and soul, writing endlessly and pathetically of the mother who ditched him.

Isn't it touching how much faith people place in science's ability to rescue them from what were once thought to be life's immutable inconveniences? Want to ensure that your next child is a girl? Abort the male embryos until a double X shows up. Better yet, have the doctor control the outcome in a petri dish. Don't want children? Have a vasectomy or a tubal ligation. Got AIDS? Go on protease inhibitors. Should any of these interventions fail, you can always cry malpractice and sue the scrubs off of the offending physicians. And isn't it time we were liberated from that most intolerable of constraints, mortality itself?

In Cunningham's vision, everyone will be free to pursue her own interests, "careless of consequence," as Evelyn Waugh said of his damnably clownish rogues. In this brave new world, heedlessness will be counted a higher sort of nobility.

Even Virginia Woolf would blanch to see her art and thought serving such a narcissistic agenda.

Speaking of narcissism, we have a particularly mawkish example in the person of Chuck Barris, the television impresario whose delight in conducting on-air humiliation licensed the hideous likes of Jerry Springer and Ricki Lake.

George Clooney's first directorial effort is an adaptation of Barris's *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind: An Unauthorized Autobiography*. Charlie Kaufman is his screenwriter, and together they have created from Barris's unpromising pseudo-memoir a darkly satisfying meditation on today's entertainment industry.

In his book, Barris recounts his rise in the television game-show business. He confides that he created *The Newlywed Game*, in which couples try to guess each other's preferences, to "test my theory that every American would sell out his spouse for a new refrigerator or a lawn mower." Then came *The Gong Show*, featuring talentless amateurs who were thrown off stage mid-performance at the sounding of a gong. Barris muses, "I never knew there were so many Americans waiting to get on TV and make a--holes of themselves on national television." What fun!

These shows had but one redeeming feature, and that was quite unintended: They nakedly exposed the television industry's contempt for its audience. Barris cleverly turned this contempt to profit.

Broadcast television was perfectly tailored to Barris. With his Jewish immigrant's feelings of alienation and inadequacy, he has apparently always felt himself to be on the outside looking in on America's Protestant feast, a psychic situation that engendered a peculiarly potent mixture of anger and self-disgust. Television, as he found it, offered him the weapon he needed both to gain admittance to the official WASP world and to get his revenge. His ethnic envy may explain his fantasy about working for the CIA. Barris (a manic-depressive Sam Rockwell) imagines himself inducted into the Company by an icily efficient WASP named Jim Byrd, played with droll understatement by Clooney. Byrd is everything you would ever want in an *uber*-WASP—emotionally buttoned-down, always in control, and virtually omniscient. Why wouldn't the ethnically compromised Barris feel proud to be his pick to assassinate America's enemies? Furthermore, these CIA reveries dovetail nicely with his sadistic shows, in which the point is to "kill" the contestant.

I can see why Kaufman would be attracted to this material. He demonstrated the same mixture of self-aggrandizement and self-pity in the way he portrayed himself in his screenplay for *Adaptation*. Here, with more detachment, he has given us a clearer look at the anger and angst barely below the surface of today's popular entertainment, so much so that I should probably withdraw my reservations about *Adaptation*. Kaufman may be just the satirist we need right now.

Clooney has given Kaufman's script a look and energy that is wonderfully sour and hallucinatory. And, bless him, he has had the wit to put his Aunt Rosemary on the soundtrack singing "There's No Business Like Show Business," at once a well-deserved tribute to one of America's premiere vocalists, who died last year, and a refreshingly tart sign-off for his nicely turned satire. c

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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Ten Years Later

The Hundredth Meridian is now a decade old in conception, though a year short of that in reality. It had its origin in a biweekly column I was hired by James Hill to write in the winter and spring of 1993 for the Sunday *Perspective* section of the *Arizona Republic*, which James was editing at the time. The subject of the column was broad enough: the state of Arizona, viewed from a northwestern visitor's perspective. I wrote about bullfighting south of the border, about the confrontation between environmentalists and the University of Arizona over the university's plan to build a telescopic observatory on Mt. Graham, about camping in the desert in spring. My honorarium covered a studio apartment on the top floor of a handsome apartment house in downtown Tucson overlooking the Praesidio through the fronds of half a dozen or so soaring palm trees, and I enjoyed writing the column. By early May, however, finding the weather too hot for comfort and missing the largely nonexistent Wyoming spring, I loaded my typewriter and table, a suitcase, two boxes of books and papers, and three parrots into the pickup truck and headed home to Kemmerer, from where I filed the last two columns. Summer in Wyoming is as busy as it is brief, with plenty of distractions from the craft of literature. It wasn't until the end of elk season, when I had butchered two antelope, a deer, and an elk and stowed the hunting and camping gear for the winter, that I discovered I missed writing my *Arizona Republic* column, and it was nearly Thanksgiving before the obvious struck, out of nowhere and with the blinding glare of false genius: The American West is bigger than Arizona. Why not consider the whole elephant, instead of just the Southwest hindquarter?

It is no easy thing to shoehorn an elephant into a magazine column—even an open-ended column like this one—of 2,300 words: more frustrating than pummeling a down sleeping bag back into its stuff sack. Recalling Sherwood Anderson's advice to William Faulkner, I began by concentrating on my own little postage-stamp-sized territory in the southwestern corner of Wyoming and worked outward from that. Fortunately, the West—like the elephant—is of a piece, its striking morphological components bound together under the all-encompassing wrinkled, tough, and dusty hide. What goes for the topology of the West, moreover, goes for its sociology as well, with the exception of such regional megalopolises as Denver, Salt Lake City, Boise, Las Vegas, Tucson, Phoenix, and Albuquerque (swollen, sprawling, and formless from uncontrolled immigration and the logic of the machine; none recognizable as Western or even, in the historical sense of the term, as *cities*). At the outset of *The Hundredth Meridian*, I attempted to convey an idea of the sociology of the indigenous contemporary West, its political culture, and its political ideals through a half-dozen or so introductory essays intended to provide a generalized context within which a succession of grounded, specific narratives could be understood and appreciated.

Ten years later, looking back over 80 or so installments, I am relieved to recognize that the experiences from which the narratives were made are, in the short run and, indeed, for the foreseeable future (so far as I can tell), timeless; that is, they are all, without exception, repeatable today, in spite of the explosive growth of populations, the encroachment of cities, the proliferation of governmental regulations, the greed of developers, and the power mania of so-called environmentalists. In the American West of 2003, you can still get lost (accidentally or otherwise) in the back country, hunt bear and elk for days out of earshot of another man's rifle, pack a revolver on the street and even into the supermarket, run cattle, organize a rodeo, and drive 90 miles per hour between towns set 120 miles apart without—if you have in-state license plates—much fear of arrest. The sky still shows a depthless ultraviolet at the zenith, the setting moon opposes the rising sun at the equinoxes across the vast emptiness of the Colorado Plateau, the hammered mountain ranges make a blue-and-silver palisade fronting a vast wilderness of green. Away from the big cities or the resort towns, nothing much of the natural Rocky Mountain West has changed—or appears to have changed. Otherwise, *everything* is changing or else locked, like a Greek sculpture, in an embrace of static combat.

I am speaking here of the traditional Western sense of self-identity and of its expression through the Western political system and the political culture that shapes and sustains it. It is not a matter of topicality—the coming and going of familiar public faces and their replacement by unfamiliar ones, the appearance and disappearance of items in the ceaseless procession of causes *du jour*—but of something profound: a basic alteration in the posture assumed by the West toward the rest of the country. It is a posture of resignation amounting almost to surrender in the face of an aggressive campaign for the forcible modernization and assimilation of the Rocky Mountain West, waged over decades by an overbearing and intolerant national culture that, for half a century, has resented the West's independent spirit, which it views—correctly—as a throwback to the ethos of the 19th-century frontier. Worn down by relentless assaults on its way of life and swamped by carpetbaggers driving SUVs, the West shows every sign of having given up. The Sagebrush Rebellion of the 80's and early 90's, which sought to assert and preserve a regional culture as well as to liberate and promote an economy, is as dead as Shay's Rebellion, its defiant impulse replaced by a resignation in which the dispirited former rebels feel themselves lucky to wrest a few bureaucratic concessions from Washington and the national culture.

The Bush administration, with its pro-development and anti-environmental policies, points toward the more complete destruction of the American West as a distinctive region, not toward its regeneration. The easement and even the reversal of bureaucratic policies developed by the Clinton administration, away

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from local control in the direction of further centralizing the managerial operations of the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and other federal agencies, benefit mainly alien corporations with national or international identities and loyalties; their effects are unlikely to be felt at the regional and local levels, except indirectly and in a limited way. So the colonization and general takeover of the West by imperializing national forces continues: political and economic centralization, homogenization, urbanization, industrialization, postliberalism, environmentalism, recreationism, tourism, and the consumerism that views every object of human appreciation, each and every aspect of Creation, as a commodity whose sole value is its marketability by the consumer-capitalist dynamo.

The agents of deformation include carpetbaggers and other alien subversives, quislings (native sons and daughters aspiring to East and West Coast values and ideas—and their rewards), and the general run of immigrants to the region, whether they arrive from California, Mexico, Africa, or Vietnam. The public culture of the Western states—government, newspapers, television, schools—for years now has been heavily influenced by enlightened ideas and attitudes reflecting the national agenda, while, even in the small towns, the reflexive response to the shibboleths of multiculturalism and "tolerance" is widespread among local officials, who are eager to demonstrate their cosmopolitan sophistication (meaning, their fitness to represent their constituents in Washington, D.C.). Because the West, unlike the South, has never developed a coherent political and cultural defense of its way of life, Westerners have no schematic basis from which to counter the fanatical and fantastical ideology that assails them. Meanwhile, a national administration headed by two Westerners—one of them, a cheap counterfeit; the other, an expensive retrofit—makes its stand on behalf of the custom and culture of the West by countermanding Bill Clinton's policy of barring snowmobiles from Yellowstone. (Yellowstone isn't the *West*, for God's sake: It's a *national park*. The good ole boys can see it on snowshoes or else run their noisy, smelly, obnoxious machines in the far larger and more scenic national forest reserves, "Land of Many Uses." If snowmobiles belong in the Yellowstone, why not allow dirt bikes in the Grand Canyon?)

The logic—the intent, in fact—of Cheneyism is the greater industrialization and despoliation, social and economic as well as environmental, of the Rocky Mountain West. And so is the logic of environmentalism as represented by such national organizations as the Sierra Club and nearly all the regional and local environmentalist groups across the West.

Along with the nation as a whole, the American West is being transformed by immigration. Like those of the East, South, and Midwest, the big Western cities are mobbed by immigrants from all over the world. In the case of the West, immigration is compounded by the relocation of native populations escaping the colonizing Third World outposts on the two coasts for the Mountain States heartland. The city of Denver is now one-third Mexican, while the explosive growth of the suburbs and towns along the Front Range between Colorado Springs and the Wyoming border is substantially the result of a huge influx of white refugees from California. A similar population mix—illegal Mexican immigrants and escapees from California, Oregon, and Washington—swells Rocky Mountain resort towns from Jackson, Wyoming, south to Santa Fe. But environmentalists (as distinguished from immigration restrictionists who are genuine environmentalists) have nothing to say about the connection between environmental degradation caused by the overpopulation of the waterless West and mass immigration, with the exception of the occasional impolitic outburst. (The Sierra Club, resolutely ignoring a significant and vociferous minority of its membership avid for immigration restriction, suggested, a couple of years ago, that native-born Americans ought to have fewer children in order to reduce the demographic impact of more than a million legal immigrants each year, plus a few million illegal ones.) This constrainment of environmentalists by political correctness is reinforced by the unconcern of urban Westerners made *blasé* by a combination of familiarity and social remoteness and of rural ones for whom immigrants are either absent or invisible.

What remains of the Old West is cooperating in its own destruction by a characteristic provincialism—a legacy of its historic geographic isolation—in the form of inattentiveness to events beyond its immediate experience and what it imagines to be its proper concern. The formative New West, similarly—the West of environmentalism and industrial recreationism—is conniving at the destruction of everything it seeks to defend and preserve by moral cowardice and by its embrace of the multicultural fantasy it shares with the broader leftist movement. "Everyone knows that mass immigration has to defeat everything the environmental movement has worked for for forty years," an environmentally minded Wyoming journalist remarked to me recently, "but nobody wants to say it."

And so West finally meets East and is annealed with it, absence of mind and weariness meeting at last with nihilism and the demiurge to self-destruction. c

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by Thomas Fleming

Bubba Peugeot and the Pickerel

"Good news!" a friend told me this morning in Rockford. "McDonald's is closing 16 restaurants in Serbia." Apparently Serbs, who eat the best "hamburgers" in the world and serve them with excellent bread, have stood up to the fast-food wing of the New World Order more stoutly than they resisted Madeleine Albright (though which is less appealing, Big Mac or Big Maddy—the woman should be forbidden to expose those legs in a skirt—is hard to say).

One of the closed restaurants was in Zrenjanin in Banat, a part of Vojvodina (the region between Belgrade and Hungary), where people eat as well as they do anywhere on the globe. After I appeared on a television show in Zrenjanin last October, the host took me to an old brew-pub where we gorged on barbecued meats and fresh beer. In the old days, this brewery had been owned by Dundjerski, the richest Serb in Austria-Hungary. Once, on a trip to Budapest, Dundjerski ordered beer in a fashionable restaurant. A group of Hungarian aristocrats, wanting to show their contempt for the peasant, ordered a huge bucket of beer and used it to cool their bottles of champagne. Undaunted, Dundjerski ordered a bucket of champagne with which he cooled his beer. Dundjerski lived it up in Budapest, and, if his wife was away, he entertained actresses at his estate in Vojvodina, drinking and frolicking in his swimming pool.

Here, at Dundjerski's *pivnica*, is simple living at its best. The band plays traditional Serbian music, and tables full of students drink beer and sing along. Most of the songs are 50 to 150 years old, yet these kids seem to have an inexhaustible repertoire. In the men's room (whose plumbing is older than some of the songs), the young men give me the familiar suspicious glances that greet foreigners in a land of peasants used to being invaded. For all they know, I am one of those Hungarians who have come to Vojvodina to buy up property in anticipation of NATO's next campaign to break up Yugoslavia and destabilize Europe.

The week before, I had spent a day with my friend Branko, driving around the hilly parkland of Fruška Gora, a little to the west of Zrenjanin. We visit several monasteries, including Grgolac, where we stop to admire the altar-painting of Uroš Predič, Dundjerski's friend. We have to admire the painting from afar, because a surly nun tells us not to walk on the carpet she has just vacuumed. Krušedol sits on a charming hillside, and, walking around the church, built in an Austrian baroque style that still manages to convey the Orthodox sense of mystery, and through the haphazard monastic complex, we are confronted by a series of odd angles and diminishing perspectives that make us think we are in another world. Losing our way several times among the hills, we finally come upon Velika Remeta, where a friendly nun insists on giving us a glass of *rakija* made from quince (*dunja*).

We stop in Sremski Karlovci—to have a coffee (and more *rakija*) and to look at the church, I am told, but, in fact, to find a wine shop, where Branko buys enough to float the van he is driving. We are hungry by now, but we drive on through Novi Sad and up the Danube to the restaurant of "Bata Pež." This Bubba Peugeot has perched his restaurant on an undeveloped stretch of the Danube. We look into the handsome interior, with the white cloths and gleaming crystal, but, since the day is just warm enough, we choose to sit outside—if only to escape a pianist who, the poster promises, will be gracefully styling international pop tunes.

We sit and watch the freshets of wind drive little patches of cloud across the sky. Every time the sun appears, it lights up the wind-whipped waves into beaten gold and tricks us into thinking the Danube really is blue. The opposite shore is dotted with groves of trees before curving up toward Hungary. Thinking about what to eat, we toss down several glasses of a very strong *dunja*. (Branko's comment is that he was only drinking to be polite and did not even try to keep up with me.)

We are bent on eating fish from the river, but the waiter, whose grace and discretion belong to another time, suggests we split an order of duck paprikash as a starter. The paprikash is a masterpiece, not overflavored with paprika or thickened too much with sour cream. The duck is still moist and stands up to the sauce far better than beef or pork can. We are, after all, in a land that was once Hungarian and should expect a good paprikash, but this is so good that I take the idea home with me and try it out in the kitchen with spectacular results.

Anticipating fish, we are drinking a white wine from the region—crisp and brilliant, without any of the tricks played by Californians hoping to win prizes for the 16 different hints of flavor. I am a simple man, and the rush of blackberry, oak, cinnamon, and who-knows-what confuses a brain that only wants to enjoy good food and drink. This wine, I am happy to declare, will win no prizes. The fish is grilled *smudj*, a perch or pickerel straight out of the Danube. It is just oily enough to be grilled, and, although I am stuffed, halfway through the fish, I find myself sucking the last sweet bits off the bone. I briefly consider attacking the brains and the eyeballs, but enough is enough. We pass on dessert, though we do drink another bottle of the wine and order Serbian (that is, Turkish) coffee, if only as an excuse to linger.

"Why would anyone want to be anyplace but here?" I ask Branko. His wife had suggested the place, after eating there during a business conference a day or two earlier. A large group of conference participants, smug in their American clothes and 1980's Jack Kemp poofed hairdos, come out on the deck, and Branko groans. I tell him not to worry. Out here, there is much too much wind for their hair. Sure enough, they glance a moment at the Danube in its glory and file back in, a bit disgruntled, holding their blowdrys in their hands and talking loudly of their big deals. This is one of the reasons we sat outside, exults Branko, as the wind, freshening across the river, blows our hair into disarray and scatters napkins across the deck. c

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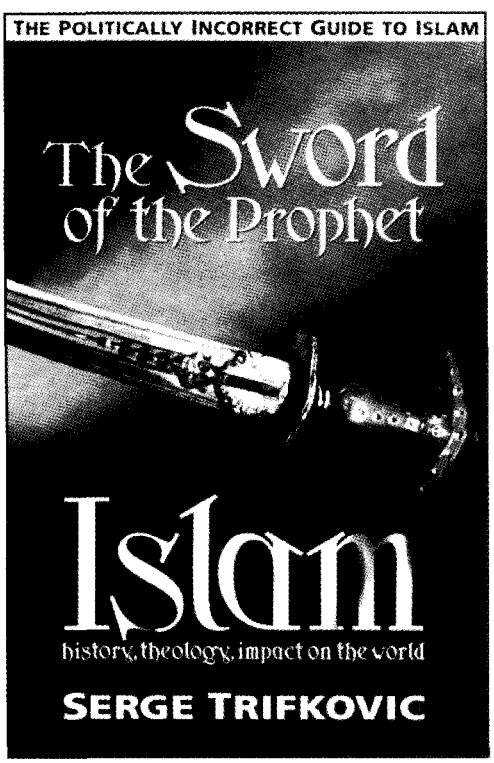
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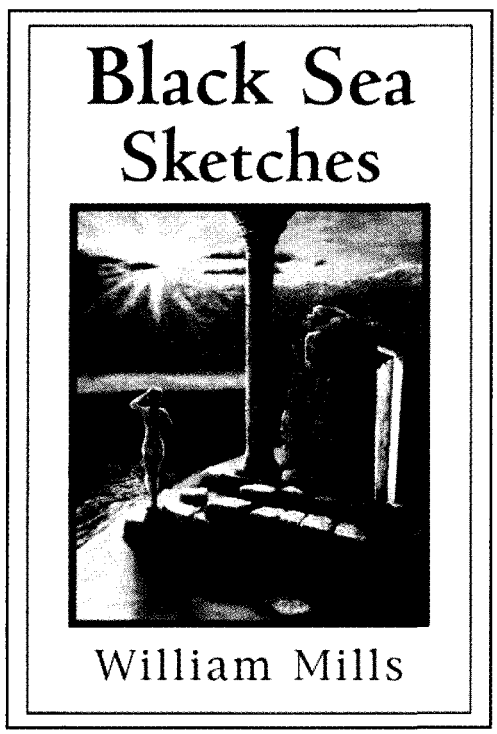

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